



"The next moment I was shaking hands with Wolstenholme."—PAGE 19.

Thirteen at Dinner

and what came of it

BRING

ARROWSMITH'S CHRISTMAS ANNUAL

FOR

1881



LONDON

GRIFFITH AND FARRAN, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD

BRISTOL: J. W. ARROWSMITH, QUAY STREET

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J. W. ARROWSMITH,
Printer,
QUAY STREET, BRISTOL



How it came about.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AUTHORS AT WORK."

- "**W**HAT! Thirteen of us?"
- "No, yes! By George, so there are!"
- "But you don't believe in superstitions of that sort?"
- "Of course not; old women's tales! But we can soon put the superstition to the test. Let us all meet again this time next year, in this room and around this table."
- "Capital idea! And every man bring a story of his own with him, a sketch, a legend, or a song."
- "Yes, and then put them all into a book and publish them."
- "As ARROWSMITH'S ANNUAL? I'll print it, if you will send me the stories or the songs, good, bad or indifferent, and we will have the pleasure of reading them together for the first time."
- "What shall we call it? We must have a good title, a title that will take. The title is everything."
- "The title—and the cover."
- "Well, this dinner settles the title. 'Thirteen at Dinner!'"
- "Yes, THIRTEEN AT DINNER AND WHAT CAME OF IT!"

This is no fiction. It is plain matter of fact, a mere transcription of a conversation which took place about a year ago around the hospitable board of a Hostelry in Clifton, which has long been famous for its cuisine and its cellar.

There *were* thirteen of us at dinner, and we had met to chat over this project in a sedate and business sort of way over an

ortolan and a glass of Burgundy, in a quiet room near St. Vincent's Rocks.

We were none of us freshmen in literature. There were among the "Thirteen" poets whose songs are familiar in every English household, in every English port, in the sierras of Nevada and under the Southern Cross, artists whose sketches and finished pictures are to be found every year at the Grosvenor, in Suffolk Street and on the walls of the Royal Academy, men whose works of fiction are distinguished by their power and brilliancy wherever English fiction is read, whose epigrams and *jeux d'esprit* have often sparkled in the pages of *Punch* and its rivals, whose contributions are to be found in most of our Magazines—in *Blackwood*, in *Macmillan*, in *Temple Bar*, crack shots from Wimbledon, a sportsman whose exploits with gun and rod are part of the traditions of a city which has always been famous for its sportsmen, and an Official Liquidator who, even with the care of a Bank upon him, finds time to cultivate literature and art in the congenial atmosphere of the "Savage" and the "Falstaff."

Yet when we met to talk of this publication we met, most of us, full of difficulties, difficulties as to contributions, difficulties as to publishing, difficulties as to the title: the soup was hardly upon the table before every difficulty had vanished, before the title had been selected, most of the contributions settled, and long before we reached the dessert and the claret the men of business had settled all matters of £ s. d. among themselves, appointed a treasurer and an auditor, and all that remained was to smoke a cigar and play a rubber of whist.

This publication is the result.

It comprises everything that we thought a Christmas Annual ought to comprise—poetry, sketches, legends, songs, two or three pieces of humorous satire upon the foibles and follies of the day, in science and poetry, a chat about ghosts to read over the yule log on Christmas Eve; and if this publication does nothing more, it will, I believe, justify the audacity which led us to suppose that if the provinces could produce a successful Christmas Annual,

Bristol, with its old literary and artistic associations, ought to be the first to do it.

There is no city in England which has nobler traditions in literature and art than Bristol. It is the city of Chatterton, of Coleridge, of Southey, the city of Turner, of Baily, of Müller. Here in the gardens of the old Bishop's Palace Butler pondered over the work which holds in theology the place which the *Principia* of Newton holds in science, and in the Deanery, where Hallam and Layard passed their boyhood, Warburton wrote his *Divine Legation of Moses*. Hakluyt held a stall in Bristol Cathedral when he wrote those *Voyages* which were the inspiration of many generations of Englishmen, and in recent times one of the most brilliant of Edinburgh Reviewers—Sydney Smith—has made his voice heard in a city which has been distinguished by the eloquence of Edmund Burke and Robert Hall.

These are proud names in literature and art. We have few names like them in the present day. Yet even in the present day we have in the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol a man almost as distinguished by his scholarship and range of thought as Butler, and I hope independently of the literary and artistic associations of the city, that this publication will, in itself, be enough to show that the lighter graces of literature and art are cultivated with no less affection and with not much less success than they were cultivated in the days when the Rowley Poems were produced among the dust of the old muniment room of St. Mary Redcliff, and when Southey in a cottage at Wesbury-on-Trym was bracing all the faculties of his heart and brain for a life of noble toil in a profession which is none the less honourable even when it is not as successful as a speculation in corn or a corner in cotton.

It is now ten months since we met to talk of this publication. It was a wild temptestuous night. The snow lay thick upon the ground. The wind howled wildly over Clifton Down, and through the gorges of the Avon. Leigh woods glistened and sparkled with the frost and snow in the moon-light. The idea of publishing an *Annual* was an old idea with most of us; but it was an idea that

had not till then taken anything like distinct form or shape with any of us. It assumed that form and shape almost the instant we met together, and to-night we meet once more to compare notes upon the result, to bring each his contribution, and to see how these contributions look in print.

I think we shall all be able to congratulate ourselves upon the result, and from one point I am sure we shall be able to do so, I mean of course in securing the co-operation of one whose name is a host in itself, that of Miss Amelia B. Edwards. Her contribution takes the first place in this Annual by a double right, by the courtesy which is always due to a lady, and by the consideration which is due to everything that comes from one of the most graceful pens in the lighter literature of the day. *Renaissance in Italy* has made the name of John Addington Symonds famous as that of a great master of English prose: but it is a name that held a high place in Bristol long before it was coupled with those of Michael Angelo and the Greek poets, and in *The Story of Ginevra Degli Almieri* we have a legend which if pathetic in itself loses none of its pathos in the antique rhyme which enshrines a story of weird and mystical interest. Hugh Conway is better known by his songs than by his stories; but Hugh Conway tells a story as well as he sings a song, and the proof is I think to be found in *The Daughter of the Stars*. The rest of the contributions speak for themselves: they are from the pen and pencil of men whose names are none of them likely to be lost in a crowd, those of F. E. Weatherly and J. Jackson Curnock for instance, and if we congratulate ourselves upon the co-operation of Miss Edwards and Mr. Addington Symonds I do not think either of them will find in the contributions which we bind up with theirs anything which is unworthy of the place we have assigned it, or of a publication which, if it may be said to have originated in a freak, will I hope be found sufficiently interesting and prove sufficiently successful to become one of the literary institutions of Christmas—at once an Annual and a Perennial.

14th October, 1881.



Was it an Illusion ?

A PARSON'S STORY.

BY AMELIA B. EDWARDS.

THE facts which I am about to relate happened to myself some sixteen or eighteen years ago, at which time I served Her Majesty as an Inspector of Schools. Now, the Provincial Inspector is perpetually on the move; and I was still young enough to enjoy a life of constant travelling. There are, indeed, many less agreeable ways in which an unbeneficed parson may contrive to scorn delights and live laborious days. In remote places where strangers are scarce, his annual visit is an important event; and though at the close of a long day's work he would sometimes prefer the quiet of a country inn, he generally finds himself the destined guest of the rector or the squire. It rests with himself to turn these opportunities to account. If he makes himself pleasant, he forms agreeable friendships and sees English home-life under one of its most attractive aspects; and sometimes, even in these days of universal common-placeness, he may have the luck to meet with an adventure.

My first appointment was to a West of England district largely peopled with my personal friends and connections. It was, therefore, much to my annoyance that I found myself, after a couple of years of very pleasant work, transferred to what a policeman would call "a new beat," up in the North. Unfortunately for me, my new

beat—a rambling, thinly-populated area of something under 1,800 square miles—was three times as large as the old one, and more than proportionately unmanageable. Intersected at right angles by two ranges of barren hills and cut off to a large extent from the main lines of railway, it united about every inconvenience that a district could possess. The villages lay wide apart, often separated by long tracts of moorland; and in place of the well-warmed railway compartment and the frequent manor-house, I now spent half my time in hired vehicles and lonely country inns.

I had been in possession of this district for some three months or so, and winter was near at hand, when I paid my first visit of inspection to Pit End, an outlying hamlet in the most northerly corner of my county, just twenty-two miles from the nearest station. Having slept overnight at a place called Drumley, and inspected Drumley schools in the morning, I started for Pit End, with fourteen miles of railway and twenty-two of hilly cross-roads between myself and my journey's end. I made, of course, all the inquiries I could think of before leaving; but neither the Drumley schoolmaster nor the landlord of the Drumley "Feathers" knew much more of Pit End than its name. My predecessor, it seemed, had been in the habit of taking Pit End "from the other side;" the roads, though longer, being less hilly that way. That the place boasted some kind of inn was certain; but it was an inn unknown to fame, and to mine host of the "Feathers." Be it good or bad, however, I should have to put up at it.

Upon this scant information I started. My fourteen miles of railway journey soon ended at a place called Bramsford Road, whence an omnibus conveyed passengers to a dull little town called Bramsford Market. Here I found a horse and "trap" to carry me on to my destination; the horse being a raw-boned grey with a profile like a camel, and the trap a ricketty high gig which had probably done commercial travelling in the days of its youth. From Bramsford Market the way lay over a succession of long hills, rising to a barren, high-level plateau. It was a dull, raw

afternoon of mid-November, growing duller and more raw as the day waned and the east wind blew keener.

"How much farther now, driver?" I asked, as we alighted at the foot of a longer and a stiffer hill than any we had yet passed over.

He turned a straw in his mouth, and grunted something about "fower or foive mile by the rooad."

And then I learned that by turning off at a point which he described as "t'owld tollus," and taking a certain footpath across the fields, this distance might be considerably shortened. I decided, therefore, to walk the rest of the way; and, setting off at a good pace, I soon left driver and trap behind. At the top of the hill I lost sight of them, and coming presently to a little road-side ruin which I at once recognised as the old toll-house, I found the footpath without difficulty. It led me across a barren slope divided by stone fences, with here and there a group of shattered sheds, a tall chimney, and a blackened cinder-mound, marking the site of a deserted mine. A light fog, meanwhile, was creeping up from the east, and the dusk was gathering fast.

Now, to lose one's way in such a place and at such an hour would be disagreeable enough, and the footpath—a trodden track already half obliterated—would be indistinguishable in the course of another ten minutes. Looking anxiously ahead, therefore, in the hope of seeing some sign of habitation, I hastened on, scaling one stone stile after another, till I all at once found myself skirting a line of park-palings. Following these, with bare boughs branching out overhead and dead leaves rustling underfoot, I came presently to a point where the path divided; here continuing to skirt the enclosure, and striking off yonder across a space of open meadow.

Which should I take?

By following the fence, I should be sure to arrive at a lodge where I could inquire my way to Pit End; but then the park might be of any extent, and I might have a long distance to go before I came to the nearest lodge. Again, the meadow-path,

instead of leading to Pit End, might take me in a totally opposite direction. But there was no time to be lost in hesitation; so I chose the meadow, the farther end of which was lost to sight in a fleecy bank of fog.

Up to this moment I had not met a living soul of whom to ask my way; it was, therefore, with no little sense of relief that I saw a man emerging from the fog and coming along the path. As we neared each other—I advancing rapidly; he slowly—I observed that he dragged the left foot, limping as he walked. It was, however, so dark and so misty, that not till we were within half a dozen yards of each other could I see that he wore a dark suit and an Anglican felt hat, and looked something like a dissenting minister. As soon as we were within speaking distance, I addressed him.

"Can you tell me," I said, "if I am right for Pit End, and how far I have to go?"

He came on, looking straight before him; taking no notice of my question; apparently not hearing it.

"I beg your pardon," I said, raising my voice; "but will this path take me to Pit End, and if so"——

He had passed on without pausing; without looking at me; I could almost have believed, without seeing me!

I stopped, with the words on my lips; then turned to look after—perhaps, to follow—him.

But instead of following, I stood bewildered.

What had become of him? And what lad was that going up the path by which I had just come—that tall lad, half-running, half-walking, with a fishing-rod over his shoulder? I could have taken my oath that I had neither met nor passed him. Where then had he come from? And where was the man to whom I had spoken not three seconds ago, and who, at his limping pace, could not have made more than a couple of yards in the time?

My stupefaction was such that I stood quite still, looking after

the lad with the fishing-rod till he disappeared in the gloom under the park-palings.

Was I dreaming?

Darkness, meanwhile, had closed in apace, and, dreaming or not dreaming, I must push on, or find myself benighted. So I hurried forward, turning my back on the last gleam of daylight, and plunging deeper into the fog at every step. I was, however, close upon my journey's end. The path ended at a turnstile; the turnstile opened upon a steep lane; and at the bottom of the lane, down which I stumbled among stones and ruts, I came in sight of the welcome glare of a blacksmith's forge.

Here, then, was Pit End. I found my trap standing at the door of the village inn; the raw-boned grey stabled for the night; the landlord watching for my arrival.

The "Greyhound" was a hostelry of modest pretensions, and I shared its little parlour with a couple of small farmers and a young man who informed me that he "travelled in" Thorley's Food for Cattle. Here I dined, wrote my letters, chatted awhile with the landlord, and picked up such scraps of local news as fell in my way.

There was, it seemed, no resident parson at Pit End; the incumbent being a pluralist with three small livings, the duties of which, by the help of a rotatory curate, he discharged in a somewhat easy fashion. Pit End, as the smallest and farthest off, came in for but one service each Sunday, and was almost wholly relegated to the curate. The squire was a more confirmed absentee than even the vicar. He lived chiefly in Paris, spending abroad the wealth of his Pit End coal-fields. He happened to be at home just now, the landlord said, after five years' absence; but he would be off again next week, and another five years might probably elapse before they should again see him at Blackwater Chase.

Blackwater Chase!—the name was not new to me; yet I could not remember where I had heard it. When, however, mine host went on to say that, despite his absenteeism, Mr. Wolstenholme was "a pleasant gentleman and a good landlord," and that, after

all, Blackwater Chase was "a lonesome sort of world-end place for a young man to bury himself in," then I at once remembered Phil Wolstenholme of Balliol, who, in his grand way, had once upon a time given me a general invitation to the shooting at Blackwater Chase. That was twelve years ago, when I was reading hard at Wadham, and Wolstenholme—the idol of a clique to which I did not belong—was boating, betting, writing poetry, and giving wine parties at Balliol.

Yes; I remembered all about him—his handsome face, his luxurious rooms, his boyish prodigality, his utter indolence, and the blind faith of his worshippers, who believed that he had only "to pull himself together" in order to carry off every honour which the University had to bestow. He did take the Newdigate; but it was his first and last achievement, and he left college with the reputation of having narrowly escaped a plucking. How vividly it all came back upon my memory—the old college life, the college friendships, the pleasant time that could never come again! It was but twelve years ago; yet it seemed like half a century. And now, after these twelve years, here were Wolstenholme and I as near neighbours as in our Oxford days! I wondered if he was much changed, and whether, if changed, it were for the better or the worse. Had his generous impulses developed into sterling virtues, or had his follies hardened into vices? Should I let him know where I was, and so judge for myself? Nothing would be easier than to pencil a line upon a card to-morrow morning, and send it up to the big house. Yet, merely to satisfy a purposeless curiosity, was it worth while to re-open the acquaintanceship?

Thus musing, I sat late over the fire, and by the time I went to bed, I had well nigh forgotten my adventure with the man who vanished so mysteriously and the boy who seemed to come from nowhere.

Next morning, finding I had abundant time at my disposal, I did pencil that line upon my card—a mere line, saying that I believed we had known each other at Oxford, and that I should be

inspecting the National Schools from nine till about eleven. And then, having despatched it by one of my landlord's sons, I went off to my work. The day was brilliantly fine. The wind had shifted round to the north, the sun shone clear and cold, and the smoke-grimed hamlet, and the gaunt buildings clustered at the mouths of the coalpits round about, looked as bright as they could look at any time of the year. The village was built up a long hill-side; the church and schools being at the top, and the "Greyhound" at the bottom. Looking vainly for the lane by which I had come the night before, I climbed the one rambling street, followed a path that skirted the churchyard, and found myself at the schools. These, with the teachers' dwellings, formed three sides of a quadrangle; the fourth side consisting of an iron railing and a gate. An inscribed tablet over the main entrance-door recorded how "These school-houses were re-built by Philip Wolstenhome, Esquire: A.D. 18—."

"Mr. Wolstenholme, sir, is the Lord of the Manor," said a soft, obsequious voice.

I turned, and found the speaker at my elbow, a square-built, sallow man, all in black, with a bundle of copy-books under his arm.

"You are the—the schoolmaster?" I said; unable to remember his name, and puzzled by a vague recollection of his face.

"Just so, sir. I conclude I have the honour of addressing Mr. Frazer?"

It was a singular face, very pallid and anxious-looking. The eyes, too, had a watchful, almost a startled, look in them, which struck me as peculiarly unpleasant.

"Yes," I replied, still wondering where and when I had seen him. "My name is Frazer. Yours, I believe, is—is—," and I put my hand into my pocket for my examination papers.

"Skelton—Ebenezer Skelton. Will you please to take the boys first, sir?"

The words were common-place enough, but the man's manner was studiously, disagreeably deferential; his very name being

given, as it were, under protest, as if too insignificant to be mentioned.

I said I would begin with the boys; and so moved on. Then, for we had stood still till now, I saw that the schoolmaster was lame. In that moment I remembered him. He was the man I met in the fog.

"I met you yesterday afternoon, Mr. Skelton," I said, as we went into the school-room.

"Yesterday afternoon, sir?" he repeated.

"You did not seem to observe me," I said, carelessly. "I spoke to you, in fact; but you did not reply to me."

"But—indeed, I beg your pardon, sir—it must have been some one else," said the schoolmaster. "I did not go out yesterday afternoon."

How could this be anything but a falsehood? I might have been mistaken as to the man's face; though it was such a singular face, and I had seen it quite plainly. But how could I be mistaken as to his lameness? Besides, that curious trailing of the right foot, as if the ankle was broken, was not an ordinary lameness.

I suppose I looked incredulous, for he added, hastily:—

"Even if I had not been preparing the boys for inspection, sir, I should not have gone out yesterday afternoon. It was too damp and foggy. I am obliged to be careful—I have a very delicate chest."

My dislike to the man increased with every word he uttered. I did not ask myself with what motive he went on heaping lie upon lie; it was enough that, to serve his own ends, whatever those ends might be, he did lie with unparalleled audacity.

"We will proceed to the examination, Mr. Skelton," I said, contemptuously.

He turned, if possible, a shade paler than before, bent his head silently, and called up the scholars in their order.

I soon found that, whatever his shortcomings as to veracity, Mr. Ebenezer Skelton was a capital schoolmaster. His boys were

uncommonly well taught, and as regarded attendance, good conduct, and the like, left nothing to be desired. When, therefore, at the end of the examination, he said he hoped I would recommend the Pit End Boys' School for the Government grant, I at once assented. And now I thought I had done with Mr. Skelton for, at all events, the space of one year. Not so, however. When I came out from the Girls' School, I found him waiting at the door.

Profusely apologising, he begged leave to occupy five minutes of my valuable time. He wished, under correction, to suggest a little improvement. The boys, he said, were allowed to play in the quadrangle, which was too small, and in various ways inconvenient; but round at the back there was a piece of waste land, half an acre of which, if enclosed, would admirably answer the purpose. So saying, he led the way to the back of the building, and I followed him.

"To whom does this ground belong?" I asked.

"To Mr. Wolstenholme, sir."

"Then why not apply to Mr. Wolstenholme? He gave the schools, and I dare say he would be equally willing to give the ground."

"I beg your pardon, sir. Mr. Wolstenholme has not been over here since his return, and it is quite possible that he may leave Pit End without honouring us with a visit. I could not take the liberty of writing to him, sir."

"Neither could I in my report suggest that the Government should offer to purchase a portion of Mr. Wolstenholme's land for a play-ground to schools of Mr. Wolstenholme's own building," I replied. "Under other circumstances" . . .

I stopped and looked round.

The schoolmaster repeated my last words.

"You were saying, sir—under other circumstances?"——

I looked round again.

"It seemed to me that there was some one here," I said; "some third person, not a moment ago."

"I beg your pardon, sir—a third person?"

B

"I saw his shadow on the ground, between yours and mine."

The schools faced due north, and we were standing immediately behind the buildings, with our backs to the sun. The place was bare, and open, and high; and our shadows, sharply defined, lay stretched before our feet.

"A—a shadow?" he faltered. "Impossible."

There was not a bush or a tree within half a mile. There was not a cloud in the sky. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, that could have cast a shadow.

I admitted that it was impossible, and that I must have fancied it; and so went back to the matter of the play-ground.

"Should you see Mr. Wolstenholme," I said, "you are at liberty to say that I thought it a desirable improvement."

"I am much obliged to you, sir. Thank you—thank you very much," he said, cringing at every word. "But—but I had hoped that you might perhaps use your influence"——

"Look there!" I interrupted. "Is *that* fancy?"

We were now close under the blank wall of the boys' school-room. On this wall, lying to the full sunlight, our shadows—mine and the schoolmaster's—were projected. And there, too—no longer between his and mine, but a little way apart, as if the intruder were standing back—there, as sharply defined as if cast by lime-light on a prepared background, I again distinctly saw, though but for a moment, that third shadow. As I spoke, as I looked round, it was gone!

"Did you not see it?" I asked.

He shook his head.

"I—I saw nothing," he said, faintly. "What was it?"

His lips were white. He seemed scarcely able to stand.

"But you *must* have seen it!" I exclaimed. "It fell just there—where that bit of ivy grows. There must be some boy hiding—it was a boy's shadow, I am confident."

"A boy's shadow!" he echoed, looking round in a wild, frightened way. "There is no place—for a boy—to hide."

"Place or no place," I said, angrily, "if I catch him, he shall feel the weight of my cane!"

I searched backwards and forwards in every direction, the schoolmaster, with his scared face, limping at my heels; but, rough and irregular as the ground was, there was not a hole in it big enough to shelter a rabbit.

"But what was it?" I said, impatiently.

"An—an illusion. Begging your pardon, sir—an illusion."

He looked so like a beaten hound, so frightened, so fawning, that I felt I could with lively satisfaction have transferred the threatened caning to his own shoulders.

"But you saw it?" I said again.

"No, sir. Upon my honour, no, sir. I saw nothing—nothing whatever."

His looks belied his words. I felt positive that he had not only seen the shadow, but that he knew more about it than he chose to tell. I was by this time really angry. To be made the object of a boyish trick, and to be hoodwinked by the connivance of the schoolmaster, was too much. It was an insult to myself and my office.

I scarcely knew what I said; something short and stern at all events. Then, having said it, I turned my back upon Mr. Skelton and the schools, and walked rapidly back to the village.

As I neared the bottom of the hill, a dog-cart drawn by a high-stepping chestnut dashed up to the door of the "Greyhound," and the next moment I was shaking hands with Wolstenholme, of Balliol. Wolstenholme, of Balliol, as handsome as ever, dressed with the same careless dandyism, looking not a day older than when I last saw him at Oxford! He gripped me by both hands, vowed that I was his guest for the next three days, and insisted on carrying me off at once to Blackwater Chase. In vain I urged that I had two schools to inspect to-morrow ten miles the other side of Drumley; that I had a horse and trap waiting; and that my room

was ordered at the "Feathers." Wolstenholme laughed away my objections.

"My dear fellow," he said, "you will simply send your horse and trap back with a message to the 'Feathers,' and a couple of telegrams to be despatched to the two schools from Drumley station. Unforeseen circumstances compel you to defer those inspections till next week!"

And with this, in his masterful way, he shouted to the landlord to send my portmanteau up to the manor-house, pushed me up before him into the dog-cart, gave the chestnut his head, and rattled me off to Blackwater Chase.

It was a gloomy old barrack of a place, standing high in the midst of a sombre deer-park some six or seven miles in circumference. An avenue of oaks, now leafless, led up to the house; and a mournful heron-haunted tarn in the loneliest part of the park gave to the estate its name of Blackwater Chase. The place, in fact, was more like a border fastness than an English north-country mansion. Wolstenholme took me through the picture gallery and reception rooms after luncheon, and then for a canter round the park; and in the evening we dined at the upper end of a great oak hall hung with antlers, and armour, and antiquated weapons of warfare and sport.

"Now, to-morrow," said my host, as we sat over our claret in front of a blazing log-fire; "to-morrow, if we have decent weather, you shall have a day's shooting on the moors; and on Friday, if you will but be persuaded to stay a day longer, I will drive you over to Broomhead and give you a run with the Duke's hounds. Not hunt? My dear fellow, what nonsense! All our parsons hunt in this part of the world. By the way, have you ever been down a coal pit? No? Then a new experience awaits you. I'll take you down Carshalton shaft, and show you the home of the gnomes and trolls."

"Is Carshalton one of your own mines?" I asked.

"All these pits are mine," he replied. "I am king of Hades,

and rule the under world as well as the upper. There is coal everywhere underlying these moors. The whole place is honey-combed with shafts and galleries. One of our richest seams runs under this house, and there are upwards of forty men at work in it a quarter of a mile below our feet here every day. Another leads right away under the park, heaven only knows how far! My father began working it five-and-twenty years ago, and we have gone on working it ever since; yet it shows no sign of failing."

"You must be as rich as a prince with a fairy godmother!"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Well," he said, lightly, "I am rich enough to commit what follies I please; and that is saying a good deal. But then, to be always squandering money—always rambling about the world—always gratifying the impulse of the moment—is that happiness? I have been trying the experiment for the last ten years; and with what result? Would you like to see?"

He snatched up a lamp and led the way through a long suite of unfurnished rooms, the floors of which were piled high with packing cases of all sizes and shapes, labelled with the names of various foreign ports and the addresses of foreign agents innumerable. What did they contain? Precious marbles from Italy and Greece and Asia Minor; priceless paintings by old and modern masters; antiquities from the Nile, the Tigris, and the Euphrates; enamels from Persia, porcelain from China, bronzes from Japan, strange sculptures from Peru; arms, mosaics, ivories, wood-carvings, skins, tapestries, old Italian cabinets, painted bride-chests, Etruscan terracottas; treasures of all countries, of all ages, never even unpacked since they crossed that threshold which the master's foot had crossed but twice during the ten years it had taken to buy them! Should he ever open them, ever arrange them, ever enjoy them? Perhaps—if he became weary of wandering—if he married—if he built a gallery to receive them. If not—— well, he might found and endow a museum; or leave the things to the nation. What

did it matter? Collecting was like fox-hunting; the pleasure was in the pursuit, and ended with it!

We sat up late that first night, I can hardly say conversing, for Wolstenholme did the talking, while I, willing to be amused, led him on to tell me something of his wanderings by land and sea. So the time passed in stories of adventure, of perilous peaks ascended, of deserts traversed, of unknown ruins explored, of "hair-breadth 'scapes" from icebergs and earthquakes and storms; and when at last he flung the end of his cigar into the fire and discovered that it was time to go to bed, the clock on the mantel-shelf pointed far on among the small hours of the morning.

Next day, according to the programme made out for my entertainment, we did some seven hours' partridge-shooting on the moors; and the day next following I was to go down Carshalton shaft before breakfast, and after breakfast ride over to a place some fifteen miles distant called Picts' Camp, there to see a stone circle and the ruins of a pre-historic fort.

Unused to field sports, I slept heavily after those seven hours with the guns, and was slow to wake when Wolstenholme's valet came next morning to my bedside with the waterproof suit in which I was to effect my descent into Hades.

"Mr. Wolstenholme says, sir, that you had better not take your bath till you come back," said this gentlemanly vassal, disposing the ungainly garments across the back of a chair as artistically as if he were laying out my best evening suit. "And you will be pleased to dress warmly underneath the waterproofs, for it is very chilly in the mine."

I surveyed the garments with reluctance. The morning was frosty, and the prospect of being lowered into the bowels of the earth, cold, fasting, and unwashed, was anything but attractive. Should I send word that I would rather not go? I hesitated; but while I was hesitating, the gentlemanly valet vanished, and my opportunity was lost. Grumbling and shivering, I got up, donned the cold and shiny suit, and went downstairs

A murmur of voices met my ear as I drew near the breakfast-room. Going in, I found some ten or a dozen stalwart colliers grouped near the door, and Wolstenholme, looking somewhat serious, standing with his back to the fire.

"Look here, Frazer," he said, with a short laugh, "here's a pleasant piece of news. A fissure has opened in the bed of Blackwater tarn; the lake has disappeared in the night; and the mine is flooded! No Carshalton shaft for you to-day!"

"Seven foot o' wayter in Jukes's seam, an' eight in th' owd north and south galleries," growled a huge red-headed fellow, who seemed to be the spokesman.

"An' it's the Lord's own marcy a' happened o' noight-time, or we'd be dead men all," added another.

"That's true, my man," said Wolstenholme, answering the last speaker. "It might have drowned you like rats in a trap; so we may thank our stars it's no worse. And now, to work with the pumps! Lucky for us that we know what to do, and how to do it."

So saying, he dismissed the men with a good-humoured nod, and an order for unlimited ale.

I listened in blank amazement. The tarn vanished! I could not believe it. Wolstenholme assured me, however, that it was by no means a solitary phenomenon. Rivers had been known to disappear before now, in mining districts; and sometimes, instead of merely cracking, the ground would cave in, burying not merely houses, but whole hamlets in one common ruin. The foundations of such houses were, however, generally known to be insecure long enough before the crash came; and these accidents were not therefore often followed by loss of life.

"And now," he said, lightly, "you may doff your fancy costume; for I shall have time this morning for nothing but business. It is not every day that one loses a lake, and has to pump it up again!"

Breakfast over, we went round to the mouth of the pit, and saw the men fixing the pumps. Later on, when the work was fairly in train, we started off across the park to view the scene of

the catastrophe. Our way lay far from the house across a wooded upland, beyond which we followed a broad glade leading to the tarn. Just as we entered this glade—Wolstenholme rattling on and turning the whole affair into jest—a tall, slender lad, with a fishing-rod across his shoulder, came out from one of the side paths to the right, crossed the open at a long slant, and disappeared among the tree-trunks on the opposite side. I recognised him instantly. It was the boy whom I saw the other day, just after meeting the schoolmaster in the meadow.

"If that boy thinks he is going to fish in your tarn," I said, "he will find out his mistake."

"What boy?" asked Wolstenholme, looking back.

"That boy who crossed over yonder, a minute ago."

"Yonder!—in front of us?"

"Certainly. You must have seen him?"

"Not I."

"You did not see him?—a tall, thin boy, in a grey suit, with a fishing-rod over his shoulder. He disappeared behind those Scotch firs."

Wolstenholme looked at me with surprise.

"You are dreaming!" he said. "No living thing—not even a rabbit—has crossed our path since we entered the park gates."

"I am not in the habit of dreaming with my eyes open," I replied, quickly.

He laughed, and put his arm through mine.

"Eyes or no eyes," he said, "you are under an illusion this time!"

An illusion—the very word made use of by the schoolmaster! What did it mean? Could I, in truth, no longer rely upon the testimony of my senses? A thousand half-formed apprehensions flashed across me in a moment. I remembered the illusions of Nicolini, the bookseller, and other similar cases of visual hallucination, and I asked myself if I had suddenly become afflicted in like manner.

"By Jove! this *is* a queer sight!" exclaimed Wolstenholme.

And then I found that we had emerged from the glade, and were looking down upon the bed of what yesterday was Blackwater Tarn.

It was indeed a queer sight—an oblong, irregular basin of blackest slime, with here and there a sullen pool, and round the margin an irregular fringe of bulrushes. At some little distance along the bank—less than a quarter of a mile from where we were standing—a gaping crowd had gathered. All Pit End, except the men at the pumps, seemed to have turned out to stare at the bed of the vanished tarn.

Hats were pulled off and curtsies dropped at Wolstenholme's approach. He, meanwhile, came up smiling, with a pleasant word for everyone.

"Well," he said, "are you looking for the lake, my friends? You'll have to go down Carshalton shaft to find it! It's an ugly sight you've come to see, anyhow!"

"'Tis an ugly soight, squoire," replied a stalwart blacksmith in a leathern apron; "but thar's summat uglier, mebbe, than the mud, ow'r yonder."

"Something uglier than the mud?" Wolstenholme repeated.

"Wull yo be pleased to stan' this way, squoire, an' look strite across at yon little tump o' bulrashes—doan't yo see nothin'?"

"I see a log of rotten timber sticking half in and half out of the mud," said Wolstenholme; "and something—a long reed, apparently . . . by Jove! I believe it's a fishing rod!"

"It *is* a fishin' rod, squoire," said the blacksmith with rough earnestness; "an' if yon rotten timber bayn't an unburied corpse, mun I never stroike hammer on anvil agin!"

There was a buzz of acquiescence from the bystanders. 'Twas an unburied corpse, sure enough. Nobody doubted it.

Wolstenholme made a funnel with his hands, and looked through it long and steadfastly.

"It must come out, whatever it is," he said presently. "Five

feet of mud, do you say ? Then here's a sovereign apiece for the first two fellows who wade through it and bring that object to land !”

The blacksmith and another pulled off their shoes and stockings, turned up their trousers, and went in at once.

They were over their ankles at the first plunge, and, sounding their way with sticks, went deeper at every tread. As they sank, our excitement rose. Presently they were visible from only the waist upwards. We could see their chests heaving, and the muscular efforts by which each step was gained. They were yet full twenty yards from the goal when the mud mounted to their armpits . . . a few feet more, and only their heads would remain above the surface !

An uneasy movement ran through the crowd.

“Call 'em back, vor God's sake !” cried a woman's voice.

But at this moment—having reached a point where the ground gradually sloped upwards—they began to rise above the mud as rapidly as they had sunk into it. And now, black with clotted slime, they emerge waist-high . . . now they are within three or four yards of the spot . . . and now . . . now they are there !

They part the reeds—they stoop low above the shapeless object on which all eyes are turned—they half-lift it from its bed of mud—they hesitate—lay it down again—decide, apparently, to leave it there ; and turn their faces shorewards. Having come a few paces, the blacksmith remembers the fishing-rod ; turns back ; disengages the tangled line with some difficulty, and brings it over his shoulder.

They had not much to tell—standing, all mud from head to heel, on dry land again—but that little was conclusive. It was, in truth, an unburied corpse ; part of the trunk only above the surface. They tried to lift it ; but it had been so long under water, and was in so advanced a stage of decomposition, that to bring it to shore without a shutter was impossible. Being cross-questioned,

they thought, from the slenderness of the form, that it must be the body of a boy.

"Thar's the poor chap's rod, anyhow," said the blacksmith, laying it gently down upon the turf.

* * * * *

I have thus far related events as I witnessed them. Here, however, my responsibility ceases. I give the rest of my story at second-hand, briefly, as I received it some weeks later, in the following letter from Philip Wolstenholme:—

"Blackwater Chase, Dec. 20th, 18—.

"Dear Frazer,—My promised letter has been a long time on the road, but I did not see the use of writing till I had something definite to tell you. I think, however, we have now found out all that we are ever likely to know about the tragedy in the tarn; and it seems that—— but, no; I will begin at the beginning. That is to say, with the day you left the Chase, which was the day following the discovery of the body.

"You were but just gone when a police inspector arrived from Drumley (you will remember that I had immediately sent a man over to the sitting magistrate); but neither the inspector nor anyone else could do anything till the remains were brought to shore, and it took us the best part of a week to accomplish this difficult operation. We had to sink no end of big stones in order to make a rough and ready causeway across the mud. This done, the body was brought over decently upon a shutter. It proved to be the corpse of a boy of perhaps fourteen or fifteen years of age. There was a fracture three inches long at the back of the skull, evidently fatal. This might, of course, have been an accidental injury; but when the body came to be raised from where it lay, it was found to be pinned down by a pitchfork, the handle of which had been afterwards whittled off, so as not to show above the water, a discovery tantamount to evidence of murder. The features of the victim were decomposed beyond recognition; but enough of the

hair remained to show that it had been short and sandy. As for the clothing, it was a mere mass of rotten shreds; but on being subjected to some chemical process, proved to have once been a suit of lightish grey cloth.

"A crowd of witnesses came forward at this stage of the inquiry—for I am now giving you the main facts as they came out at the coroner's inquest—to prove that about a year or thirteen months ago, Skelton the schoolmaster had staying with him a lad whom he called his nephew, and to whom it was supposed that he was not particularly kind. This lad was described as tall, thin, and sandy-haired. He habitually wore a suit corresponding in colour and texture to the shreds of clothing discovered on the body in the tarn; and he was much addicted to angling about the pools and streams, wherever he might have the chance of a nibble.

"And now one thing led quickly on to another. Our Pit End shoemaker identified the boy's boots as being a pair of his own making and selling. Other witnesses testified to angry scenes between the uncle and nephew. Finally, Skelton gave himself up to justice, confessed the deed, and was duly committed to Drumley gaol for wilful murder.

"And the motive? Well, the motive is the strangest part of my story. The wretched lad was, after all, not Skelton's nephew, but Skelton's own illegitimate son. The mother was dead, and the boy lived with his maternal grandmother in a remote part of Cumberland. The old woman was poor, and the schoolmaster made her an annual allowance for his son's keep and clothing. He had not seen the boy for some years, when he sent for him to come over on a visit to Pit End. Perhaps he was weary of the tax upon his purse. Perhaps, as he himself puts it in his confession, he was disappointed to find the boy, if not actually half-witted, stupid, wilful, and ill brought-up. He at all events took a dislike to the poor brute, which dislike by and by developed into positive hatred. Some amount of provocation there would seem to have been. The boy was as backward as a child of five years old. That Skelton

put him into the Boys' School, and could do nothing with him; that he defied discipline, had a passion for fishing, and was continually wandering about the country with his rod and line, are facts borne out by the independent testimony of various witnesses. Having hidden his fishing-tackle, he was in the habit of slipping away at school-hours, and showed himself the more cunning and obstinate the more he was punished.

"At last there came a day when Skelton tracked him to the place where his rod was concealed, and thence across the meadows into the park, and as far as the tarn. His (Skelton's) account of what followed is wandering and confused. He owns to having beaten the miserable lad about the head and arms with a heavy stick that he had brought with him for the purpose; but denies that he intended to murder him. When his son fell insensible and ceased to breathe, he for the first time realised the force of the blows he had dealt. He admits that his first impulse was one, not of remorse for the deed, but of fear for his own safety. He dragged the body in among the bulrushes by the water's edge, and there concealed it as well as he could. At night, when the neighbours were in bed and asleep, he stole out by starlight, taking with him a pitchfork, a coil of rope, a couple of old iron-bars, and a knife. Thus laden, he struck out across the moor, and entered the park by a stile and footpath on the Stoneleigh side; so making a circuit of between three and four miles. A rotten old punt used at that time to be kept on the tarn. He loosed this punt from its moorings, brought it round, hauled in the body, and paddled his ghastly burden out into the middle of the lake as far as a certain clump of reeds which he had noted as a likely spot for his purpose. Here he weighted and sunk the corpse, and pinned it down by the neck with his pitchfork. He then cut away the handle of the fork; hid the fishing-rod among the reeds; and believed, as murderers always believe, that discovery was impossible. As regarded the Pit End folk, he simply gave out that his nephew had gone back to Cumberland; and no one doubted it. Now, how-

ever, he says that accident has only anticipated him ; and that he was on the point of voluntarily confessing his crime. His dreadful secret had of late become intolerable. He was haunted by an invisible Presence. That Presence sat with him at table, followed him in his walks, stood behind him in the school-room, and watched by his bedside. He never saw it ; but he felt that it was always there. Sometimes he raves of a shadow on the wall of his cell. The goal authorities are of opinion that he is of unsound mind.

"I have now told you all that there is at present to tell. The trial will not take place till the spring assizes. In the meanwhile I am off to-morrow to Paris, and thence, in about ten days, on to Nice, where letters will find me at the Hotel des Empereurs.

"Always, dear Frazer,

"Yours, &c., &c.,

"P. W.

"P.S.—Since writing the above, I have received a telegram from Drumley to say that Skelton has committed suicide. No particulars given. So ends this strange eventful history.

"By the way, that was a curious illusion of yours the other day when we were crossing the park ; and I have thought of it many times. Was it an illusion ?—that is the question."

Ay, indeed ! that *is* the question ; and it is a question which I have never yet been able to answer. Certain things I undoubtedly saw—with my mind's eye, perhaps—and as I saw them, I have described them ; withholding nothing, adding nothing, explaining nothing. Let those solve the mystery who can. For myself, I but echo Wolstenholme's question :—Was it an Illusion ?



The Story of Ginevra Degli Almieri

Who was Buried Alive in Florence.

BY JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

FIVE hundred years ago, in that fair town
Of Tuscany where Giotto built his tower,
A marble lily heavenward mid the crown
Of hills ascendant; where blue lilies flower
On the grey city walls; and Arno brown
From Vallombrosa between laurel bower
And olive garden seeks the Pisan shore;
And Florence is a joy for evermore;

Two lovers dwelt.—Their legend strange yet true,
Grave in its issues, in its ending gay,
I will in antique rhyme rehearse to you,
Even as a poet one past summer day
Told me the tale. But first I must renew
The by-gone griefs which on that people lay,
When plague was in their homes and mortal dread
O'er the doomed city like a pall was spread.

The Black Death with his dark Lethæan rod
Stalked through the streets, and maniac terror went
Before him where unseen, unheard, he trod:
Husband from wife, father from child was rent,
And human kindness 'neath the curse of God
Dried up like dew, leaving bewilderment
And blank dismay and selfish fear of hell:—
The sick were straightway buried where each fell.

Now it so happened that the flower of grace
Among the maids of Florence in that time
Was young Ginevra, with an angel's face
And soft voice musical as murmured rhyme ;
She was the scion of an ancient race,
And blooming in her girlhood's golden prime,
By words and deeds befitting noble blood
Gave promise of a glorious womanhood.

Among her many lovers there was one,
Antonio, who with service leal and long
Had wooed and waited till her heart he won :
Her secret heart he held ; for love so strong,
Lodged in a form fair as the rising sun,
May win a maiden's homage without wrong :
Yet from her sire, Bernardo, he in vain,
Being poor but noble, sought her hand to gain.

Bernardo to a youth of gentle birth,
Francesco Agolanti, stout and proud,
Rich, powerful, and withal of manly worth,
His daughter's troth in open court had vowed.
The match was equal, and their marriage mirth
Scattered for some brief hours the brooding cloud
That dwelt on Florence. But true love aloof,
Love strong as Death, flew from that noisy roof.

And so it chanced that just at eventide,
When first Ginevra crossed her bridegroom's door,
A pallor overspread her cheeks, and dyed
Her fair white brows with hues of violet o'er ;
Then clasping both hands to her aching side,
Upon the step she fell and moved no more :
The marriage songs into shrill shrieks of dread
Changed, as those merry-makers turned and fled.

"The plague, the plague !" they cried. Then, swift as doom,
Came body-buriers down the street, a crew
Black-stoled with torches in the gathering gloom,
Who on their bier the swooning maiden threw,
And bore her to her bride-bed in the tomb :

Alone she went, for all those friends untrue,
Yea and the husband sworn to shield and save,
Had shrunk with nameless horror from her grave.

Not so Antonio, not her lover leal;
For when he heard the din of marriage flutes
Break into dismal shriek and funeral wail,
Alone amid those mercenary mutes
He walked, and watched the sexton's hand unseal,
With brutal haste which the calm grave pollutes,
The marble sepulchre wherein were laid
Ginevra's forefathers among the dead.

It was a monument 'twixt door and door
Of Santa Reparata, lifted high
Above the busy crowds who pace that floor
Foot-polished, reared beneath the open sky;
And here, as was their wont in days of yore,
Each Almieri in his turn must lie,
Awaiting sepulture within the grand
Cathedral aisles of gloom Arnolfo planned.

From the huge chest the lid they wrenched in haste,
In haste consigned her to its marble maw,
And hastily the covering stone replaced;
Then, as those wardens of the dead withdraw,
Antonio for some little while embraced
The frigid coffin which, by death's fell law,
His dearest lady, so he dreamed, must hold,
Slumbering for ever in eternal cold.

There too he prayed: but when the pallid moon
Peered o'er the house-roofs, lingering, loth to part,
He left his dear love's body lapped in stone,
Bearing her pure pale image in his heart
Back to his cold fire-side, and wept alone:
"Alas," he cries, "that prayers are dumb, and art
All powerless to restore my lady's grace!
Would God that I were buried in her place!"

Now she who slept, and was not dead at all,
But only frozen in a death-like trance,

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What time the dews of night began to fall
And the white moon upon her eyes to glance,
Glinting through chinks and crannies in the wall
Ill-soldered where they laid her by mischance,
Lifted her head, and in the twilight gloom
Felt with frail fingers round about her tomb.

As one who from a dream by slow degrees
Grows into consciousness, and first is ware
Of somewhat far away he cannot seize,
And knows not where he lies, and doth not dare
To stir the floods of fear that round him freeze,
Then suddenly starts up to quick despair;
So in a moment like a scorching flame
The truth of her mishap upon her came.

“Alive, alive, laid in the dreadful grave!
Mary Madonna, have I then no hope?
Help me, thou blessed Virgin! Hear and save!”
Then like a caged bird beating on the cope
Of marble and that stubborn architrave,
The narrow room she searched. Her weak hands grope
Along the crevices where moonbeams rain;
And the lid stirs a little to her strain.

The stone lid stirs; and bending all her might
Into one utmost effort, bit by bit,
Led by the kindly silver streaming light,
With slow persistent urge she conquers it:
Then, sheeted in her grave-clothes, to the bright
Star-spangled heavens and sweet air infinite
Emerges; as on Resurrection morn
The striving dead shall be from earth re-born.

On her left hand with marbles overlaid
Soars Giotto's tower, familiar, pure and fair;
And broad before her between light and shade
Spreads the deserted silent city square.
Lost for awhile 'twixt dread and joy she stayed,
Nor dared to trust her soft feet to the bare
Pavement, and breathed the night, and felt the wind
Float in her hair and soothe her fevered mind.

Then shivering 'neath the blast October blew
From Mount Morello down the unpeopled street,
Across her breast that long white sheet she drew,
And toward her husband's home with noiseless feet
And streaming hair, pale as a phantom, flew,
In dread lest some night-wanderer she should meet,
And stood before the door, and knocked, and cried:
"Francesco, let me in!"—By the hearth-side

Francesco sat, nursing a numb dull woe,
Reckoning the days that should have been so dear.
"Who calls?" he cried. But she: "Dost thou not know
Thine own Ginevra?" Through his veins ran fear:
Crossing himself, he shuddered: "Prithee go
Back to thy grave, poor ghost! Have better cheer!
To-morrow for thy rest shall bells be rung,
And masses o'er thy buried body sung!"

In vain she wept; in vain she beat the door;
Wailing: "And is it doomed that I must die,
Twice die this night? Help, husband! I implore!"
But he was dumb, nor answered to her cry.
Then to her father's house, lashed by the frore
Whip of the wind, beneath that wintry sky,
Sickening with fear and stumbling in her shroud,
She came and called her mother's name aloud:

"O mother, mother, open! It is me!
Thine own Ginevra calls!" But the old dame,
Wrapped up in grief's insensibility,
Watched the red embers leap into a flame
Upon the hearth before her tremblingly,
And crossed herself hearing her daughter's name,
And cried: "Go hence in peace, soul pure and blest!
Fair daughter, sweet and dear, go hence and rest!"

And when Ginevra leaning on the sill
Tapped with her finger at the window-pane,
She only turned, and smit with deadly chill
Called to the sheeted ghost: "Come not again!
Some shape art thou of unimagined ill!"

My daughter rests among the dead, and fain
Am I to sleep beside her." Then her head
Sank on her breast, and nothing more she said.

Repulsed, abandoned, outcast, left to roam
With death and darkness through the frosty night,
Driven from her husband's and her father's home,
What shall Ginevra do in this sore plight?
Like a ship rudderless that rides the foam,
And drifts before the storm's relentless might,
She hurries through her kinsfolk, door by door,
Taking the same cold comfort as before:

"Go hence in peace, fair soul! Sweet ghost, repose!
Masses to-morrow for thy sake we say!"
At last unto Antonio, at the close
Of this dread night, in the first glint of day,
Fainting and dizzy with despair she goes,
To prove if lover's love be cold as they,
And knocks, and on the door-step falls full length,
Face downward, at the end of all her strength.

Antonio rose and to his window went:
"Who knocks so late?" The voice, as half-awake,
Came feebly, for life's force was well-nigh spent:
"It is Ginevra! for Christ's mercy sake
Help poor Ginevra!"—Like an arrow sent
Straight at the aim unerring archers take,
He hearing his dear lady seized a light,
Nor stayed to fear lest he should meet a sprite;

But brake the doors, and down beside her knelt;
And gazing in her face beheld how frost
Had turned her limbs to stone; then chafed and felt
Her stiffening hands, fearing that life was lost;
Then hoped that warmth once more her veins might melt,
And raised her in his arms, and shouting crossed
The threshold of his house, and in a bed
Laid her with coverlids and blankets spread;

And called his serving-maidens, by whose care,
With kindly heat and such restoratives

As women cunning in their art prepare,
Death's ice was thawed. Once more Ginevra lives,
And from her heart back to her forehead fair
And finger-tips those startled fugitives,
The vital spirits, tingling with a flush
Like breaking dawn, in sweet confusion rush.

Her faint eyes and her ears, yet half asleep,
As in a dream, the kind warm room survey;
She sees the flame upon the hearth-stone leap,
And hears the whispering maids, while pale and grey
Steals morning through the curtains folded deep
Around a bed where yet she never lay;
And at the last "Where am I?" from her lips,
Still as in murmurous dreams, soft-breathing slips.

Antonio at that low and tremulous cry
Knelt forward to the pillow where her head
Moved in unrest, and put the curtains by,
And said: "Dear love, take courage! fear hath fled
With the dark night of infelicity.
I am at hand to shield thee from all dread.
Ask and command. I wait on thy behest.
Light of my life, fear not! Sweet heart, have rest!"

And she, still timid, with a tender shame,
Said: "My Antonio, take me; I am thine.
Think of mine honour and thine own fair fame."
Then told him all her story, line by line;
And bade him seek the coffin whence she came,
And fix the lid firm on that marble shrine,
That men might think she still lay sleeping there
Secluded in death's dream from light and air.

When this was done, Antonio's mother brought
Such meat as might her failing strength restore,
And clothed her in fair silken raiment wrought
With needlework from her own bridal store,
And said: "My daughter, thou must now take thought
Whether to seek thy plighted husband, or—"
Speech failed her here; but soft Ginevra spake:
"Not so: what love hath won, let true love take!"

"I will not turn unto his home again
Who sent me to the inhospitable tomb :
Death endeth all, troth, fealty, joy and pain :
I am Antonio's treasure-trove, with whom,
If he be willing, I shall aye remain.
Death hath released me from the dreadful doom
Of life-long bondage to that man whose troth
Was but lip-service and a lying oath."

No sooner said than done. Their vows were spoken,
Their bridal rings exchanged and kisses given,
And faith confirmed by many a tender token.
Love, strong as Death, at odds with Death had striven :
Death, self-defeating, Love's false bonds had broken :
Love, loosed by Death, had found his heart's true heaven.—
Thus, when their case was tried, the verdict carried :
"Antonio and Ginevra duly married."





The Daughter of the Stars.

BY HUGH CONWAY.

I HAVE no friends—no ambition ; so the following strange events are not recorded for anyone's pleasure, or to win for myself the reputation of a capacity for weaving a marvellous tale. I write in the hope alone that chance may bear in these pages a message to one with whom I have no means of holding intercourse, unless it be in a mystical way, as between spirit and spirit.

My name is Philip Beauvais. My residence, when not roaming over the world, The Firs, Thornborough—a small town in the West of England, almost within sound of the rush of the Severn. My father, as my name will show, was French. He left his native country during one of her periodical troubles, and before order was re-asserted and he was free to return, had won my mother's heart, married, and, strange to say, settled down to a quiet English country life. He was no needy fortune-hunter, being in possession of good means ; and as my mother, the last member of an old family, was an heiress, the death of my parents, which occurred whilst I was very young, left me blessed with riches, which, as yet, have brought me little happiness.

My boyhood was lonely and sad. I was sensitive, and like all sensitive boys, unpopular with my kind. My guardian and trustee was a lawyer in London, in whom my father and mother had placed implicit confidence ; and well, from a business point of view,

did he discharge his trust. But he was a bachelor, and, if not positively disliking children, understood little about them, and the need of young hearts for kindly sympathy. He had no home he could take me to, or rather no home in the true sense of the word, so my boyhood was very dreary. University life to me was little better; there I was almost as solitary as I had been at school. I studied hard, and as the powers of my mind grew, became a dreamer of strange dreams, living almost in a world of my own creation, full of quaint fancies and poetic ideas. I was always shy, perhaps, constrained in my manner; and although, with manhood opening before me, I lost the feeling of unhappiness that clouded my boyish days, it seemed to me that my lot was to stand alone in the world, and own no friend as friendship was understood by me.

At last I took my degree and quitted Oxford, without joy or without regret. Fancying I should like to see the old home once more, I went down to the West of England.

The Firs, during my minority, had been let, furnished; but the tenant having quitted a few months before, I had resolved it should not again be occupied by a stranger. Knowing it possessed a well-stocked library, I thought I should be as happy there as elsewhere, so installed myself in the old country house, and commenced, even at my early age, the life of a recluse.

It was in January I took possession, and the months passed on, yet I stayed. May came and all the sweetness of the season, but it brought little change in my manner of life. In truth, I was settling down to a melancholy existence. I lived in books and dreams alone, and now, as I look back upon those days, it seems to me that the only breaks were the long walks I was fain to take for the sake of health. In one of these walks, when, towards evening I was returning home, as I sauntered through the lane, with its green hedge on either side, I was overtaken by a fellow-pedestrian. I remember I was holding the delicate frond of a fern I had plucked: it seemed to me a rare species, and I intended carrying

it home to identify it. As I walked, looking at it and marvelling at its beauty, footsteps sounded beside me, and the most melodious man's voice I have ever heard said,

"You are fortunate in finding that specimen in these parts; I have never met with it so far west before."

I turned as he spoke, and found by my side a man of about fifty. He was tall and well-built, dressed in the ordinary attire of an English gentleman; but, although his pronunciation was perfectly correct, something in the inflections of his voice told me he was of another clime.

I forget how he named my fern, but he evidently knew its genus, and after examining it closely returned it to me, and still continued to walk by my side, giving me an interesting little descriptive account of the curious ferns and plants of other lands. Then, adroitly drawing me into conversation, we touched, as we continued our companionship, on many other topics. On every subject he seemed equally well informed, and without the least suspicion of pedantry, spoke lucidly and pleasantly, completely drawing me out of my usual reserve. By this time I had observed he was strikingly handsome, and as, after a fashion of my own, I had studied faces all my life, I thought, as I noted his wide brow and massive chin, "This man has great intellect and immense force of character; he is a giant, and I am a dwarf beside him. He has, or should have, lordship over his fellows." Still conversing, we reached the main road, and soon stood before the gate of my house, when, conquering my natural shyness, I begged him to enter and look at a rare edition of a book we had been discussing a few minutes previously. He smiled and said, "I should have called upon you long ago, Mr. Beauvais, but heard such accounts of your unsociableness I dared not venture. It needs a bold man to disturb a poet, as I hear you are."

"Not a poet," I replied, "a dreamer only. Sometimes I think could I but embody those dreams in verse they would be poems; but there I fail."

"Tush!" he answered. "The true poem, the soul of it, is the dream; the mechanical verse is but the garb that clothes it; the flesh that makes the existence of the spirit known to the outer world."

With this we entered, and I led him to my library. He cared little for books as books; indeed, he seemed to carry the contents of every volume I could show him in his head. Never had it been my fate to meet a man of such intellect and such eclectic knowledge, or a man who could use the wisdom he possessed so aptly in conversation. He sat near me, and hour after hour entranced me with his marvellous talk. All and every subject seemed alike to him, and my interest and wonder at his resources grew and grew till they culminated, when as the night wore on our talk turned on supernatural subjects and the mystical relation between body and spirit. Then it seemed to me his eyes dilated, his intellectual face glowed more brightly, whilst he spoke as I have never heard human being speak before or since. Daring theories, wild speculations, hints at strange knowledge of his own, scorn at the ideas held by the generality of men, fell in rapid succession from his lips, clothed in brilliant, poetic and original language. He spoke as one who knew, not as one who suspected; he planted his feet firmly where those of the deepest thinkers tread with timid steps. He held all the conversation, and the night advanced as I sat, enthralled, and listened as he tore to pieces the assertions of the most eminent writers of every age and country who have treated the subject he spoke upon. One of his lighter diatribes, I remember, was in ridicule of the so-called spiritualism of our day. "Not," he said, in conclusion, "that its disciples are without an inkling of the truth. Take away the absurdity of tables and tambourines, and the bare fact of a spirit being summoned by a more powerful spirit force is reasonable enough."

"You believe, then, in the power of will?" I asked.

"I believe in the power of strong will over weak will, as I believe in the power of strong body over weak body. If by phy-

sical force I can make a body captive, why by excess of spirit power should I not enthrall a spirit? You look incredulous, but I may perhaps give you a proof. But now, Mr. Beauvais," he continued, with a rare smile and complete change of manner, "I am sure I have tired you with my wild talk; let us turn to lighter subjects."

I protested, and truthfully, that my interest in the present conversation was keen; but he only smiled in answer and adroitly turned into other intellectual pathways, and then leaving them gradually drew me to talk of my own affairs.

Recalling the conversation of that evening, I can see now that he appeared in many instances to prompt me in what I told him concerning myself, and that he seemed already to know much about my usual habits and manner of life during the last few years. That life had been uneventful enough as yet, and having no possible object in concealing any page in it, shortly he knew as much about myself as I could tell him. I am not egotistical, so perhaps he soon noticed that my interest in the turn the conversation had now taken flagged, for he rose and with courtly politeness bade me good night, exacting before he went a promise that I would pay him a return visit on the morrow. He wrote his name and address on a card, which he handed me, saying, "Your servants will tell you where to find my house; I shall expect you tomorrow evening, and we can then resume our conversation."

"And you can give me the proof you promised of the power of will, or spirit, as you term it?"

"Nay, I can do that now. See, it is just twelve o'clock. At one o'clock you may retire to rest, not before."

As he spoke he fixed his deep, lustrous eyes on mine. It seemed to me his glance only rested on me for a second; but I saw the courteous smile fade from his face, which became calm and stern. I suffered no inconvenience; I did not even, I believe, lose consciousness, for I remember I fancied I heard him close the door as he left the room, and then in a second, as it seemed, I turned in

my chair and the clock on the mantelpiece struck one. A trick, I thought, and hastily drew my watch from my pocket—it recorded the same time; and then, greatly puzzled at the occurrence, and full of curiosity as to my mysterious acquaintance, I retired to rest. I should add that the card he gave me remained between my fingers, and bore these words:—"Pedro Cardenas, The Hermitage."

The next morning I asked my housekeeper whether she knew the gentleman who had been my guest the night before, and learnt from her that his house was about three miles away, and that he led a life of the strictest seclusion. He was reputed to be very rich, but little or nothing was known for or against him. He had lived at The Hermitage about five years, and kept one servant only, a man who village gossip said was a Frenchman. Two gardeners went twice or three times a week to keep his large grounds in order, but they had never been inside the house itself. In fact, from her report I gathered that a little mystery hung over the place and its inhabitants; so after the perplexing event of the night I needed no further incentive to make me direct my steps to The Hermitage as promised.

I had little difficulty in finding the house; indeed, I had often passed it, but without noticing it specially, upon my solitary rambles. It stood back some distance from the road, entirely hidden from view by a high wall which encircled house and gardens. A large iron gate, firmly locked, I found, closed the entrance to the drive. I rang the bell and the gate was speedily opened by a sedately dressed man; a foreigner evidently. I must have been expected, as he at once led the way along the winding drive to the house; which, to my surprise, looking at the extent of the gardens around it, was comparatively small. It appeared simply a comfortable residence, without any pretension to elegance or to modern improvements. My guide conducted me to a small, well furnished room, and in broken English begged me to be seated. In a few minutes Cardenas appeared, and, as he greeted me cordially and inquired after my health, hoping he had not

trespassed too much upon my time the evening before, I fancied his features bore a faint smile of good-natured mockery. "Have you dined, Mr. Beauvais?" he asked, and upon my replying in the affirmative, suggested a walk round the gardens before it grew dark. His gardens were beautiful; smooth expanses of lawn running up to groves of fine old trees, and here and there, beds whose foliage told of the glowing beauty they would bear in a few weeks' time. I expressed my admiration, adding, "You take a great interest in horticulture?"

He shrugged his shoulders, "Not at all, but I have an object in keeping a good garden. You shall know it some day; but not yet."

Our tour finished, we returned to the house, and the evening, as the night before, flew all too rapidly as I listened to his conversation. And as I sat and saw his wonderfully expressive face, that seemed to change with every subject he touched, as the theme was gay, grave, or abstruse, I felt this man was exercising a strange influence over me that increased every hour. Naturally, I asked him about the trance, or whatever it was, I had fallen into at his command. He smiled, and said, "That is nothing; I will show you more wonders than that, some day. That is," he added, as though speaking to himself, "should I find you worthy." Several other enigmatical sayings like the above, whether dropt intentionally or by chance I know not, served to raise my new-born curiosity to the highest pitch, and to make me resolve to fathom what mystery he was hinting at; for the present, however, I could guess or learn nothing.

My visit that evening was the commencement of an intercourse almost daily. Evening after evening I sought his house. The cordial welcome he always gave me banished all my shyness and fear of intruding. I spent in his society hours of happiness of which as yet I had only dreamed. Encouraged by his sympathy, drawn on by his approval, I poured out my heart to him; I told him my wildest dreams, confided to him my most secret aspirations,

feeling I had at last found the friend I had sighed for so long. In short, he was my instructor, my counsellor, my all but father. I cannot say our confidence was reciprocal, as he told me little or nothing concerning himself; and upon my asking him once some question as to his early life, and how he had obtained his wonderful accumulation of wisdom, he replied, "Some day, soon it may be, you shall know all, but the time is scarcely come yet." By now I was convinced that this wonderful man had some strange revelation to make when he might think proper, and when that hour came its nature surpassed all my expectations.

We sat one evening in the room we generally occupied; the window was open, and the summer night crept on slowly. The sky was cloudless, and above us shone the stars. We talked, or rather conversed, but little. Cardenas seemed in a strange mood, and as he looked upwards at the heavens was whispering words in some language unintelligible to me—I fancied it was Arabic. Light rain had fallen during the evening, and the sweet scent of the freshened earth came through the open window. The night was, indeed, so beautiful, that I was quite content to sit and enjoy it in silence; but my placid reverie was at length broken by my companion, who thrilled me by saying in deep impressive tones, "Philip Beauvais, the hour has now come when I choose to tell you why I sought you, why I have made you my friend and companion—I, who have spoken to few men for many years." I listened attentively, and could see his deep, dark eyes shining in the starlight. "To-night," he continued, "at my bidding a new life opens to you. Moreover, to-night you shall see her who is destined to share it with you—the being who shall hold the love of your body through this life and the love of your spirit for ever."

My surprise at this mysterious communication kept me from speaking; but the thought flashed through my brain, "This man after all is but a charlatan, and will probably produce a magic crystal or some such device," but before I could speak he rang a bell that summoned his servant. Juan entered, bearing a lamp

that threw a soft light; having placed it on the table, he departed in his usually sedate and noiseless manner.

My companion then pressed a button in the wall, and I could hear a bell ringing at a distance; as he removed his hand he laid it on my arm. "Wait!" he said, almost sternly, "wait, and say nothing until you behold what I now would show you."

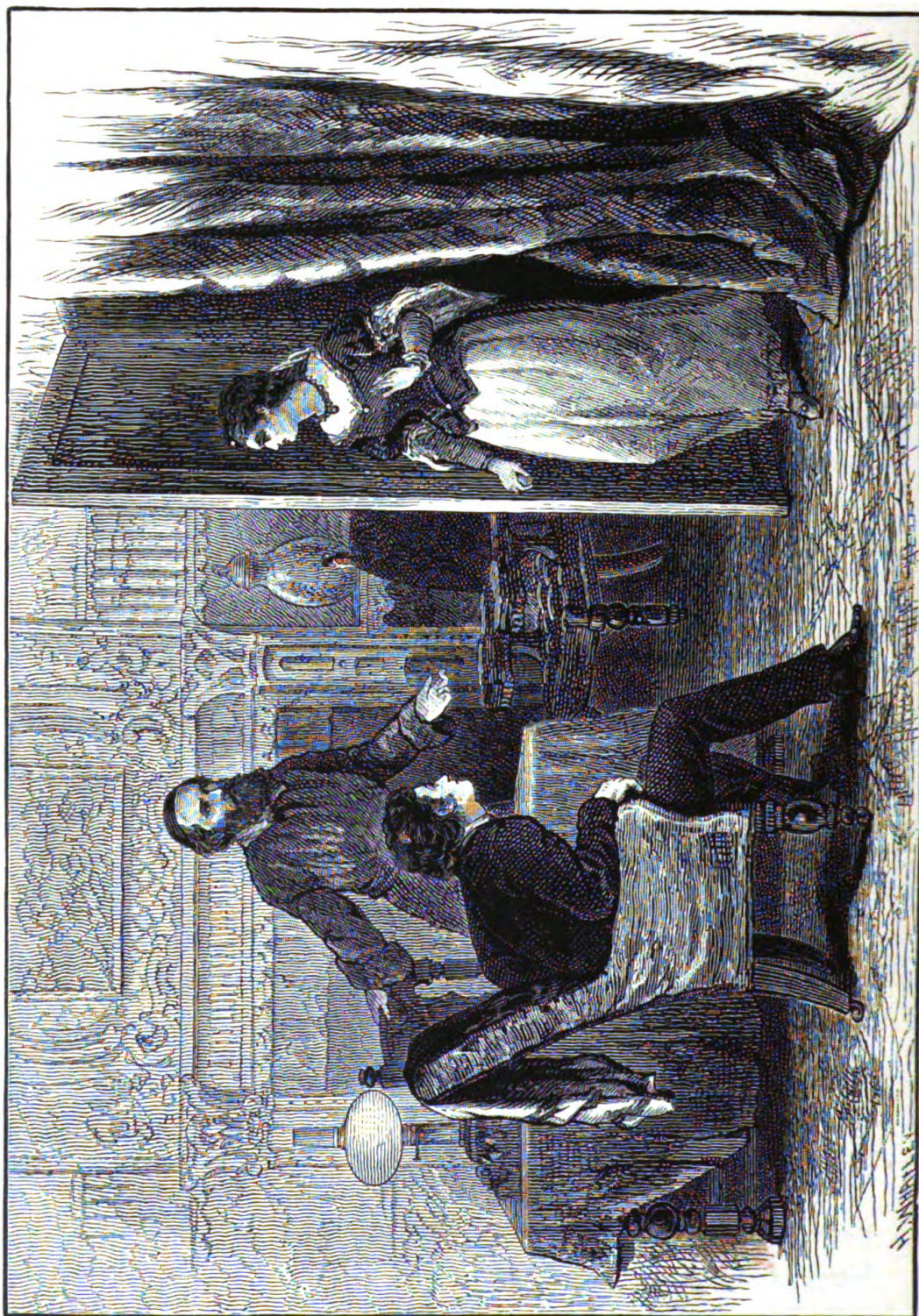
He appeared, I saw, to be labouring under some unusual excitement; his manner and voice seemed changed, so it was with the intensest feeling of curiosity I fixed my eyes on the door and kept silence as commanded. The door opened, and a maiden more beautiful than ever poet dreamed, than ever artist painted, entered. Yea, as she stood there in her loveliness, my heart leapt forth to meet her, and I knew that unless I could win her love, life for me would be but weariness and sorrow. She had crossed the threshold with a light, quick step, as though hastening to rejoin one she loved; but becoming aware of my presence, halted with downcast eyes and clasped hands. I stood spell-bound, gazing at her face and marvelling at its beauty, until Cardenas advanced, and taking her by the hand, led her towards me. "Astroea, my daughter," he said; "know him and speak to him, even as you would to me." She raised eyes to mine, and her eyes shone as the stars above. Her hand rested in mine for a second; and then, seating herself by her father, she murmured some words, a question apparently, in the same strange tongue he had previously used, and which from her lips sounded yet softer and sweeter. By this time I had regained possession of my senses, and could observe her more closely. What particularly struck me was the unearthliness of her beauty—the radiancy of it. Fair as she was, it was yet the spiritual character of her loveliness that raised her charms as far above other women's as the heavens are above the earth. Her dress was composed of some rich material, strangely made, but showing the shape of the perfect figure it covered. Rare jewels shone upon her hands, arms and neck, and from her hair blazed a diamond star. She was young—certainly not more than nineteen years of age.

We spoke little during that interview. In truth, I was so perturbed at the strangeness of our meeting, so bewildered at the words her father had spoken before she appeared, that I was like one in a dream. I made a few remarks, which she answered in well-chosen words, but was content for the greater part of the time to sit still and gaze upon her as she sat on a low ottoman by her father, with her graceful head resting on his arm and her fingers caressing his. In little more than half-an-hour's time, probably in obedience to some intimation Cardenas gave her, she rose and bade us good night. Her hand again lay in mine, and as she had conveyed to my excited heart a wild sort of idea that she was a being from another sphere, I felt a positive relief when I found my fingers close round warm flesh and blood. Gracefully as she had entered, she left us; and as the door closed upon her I turned to Cardenas and exclaimed, "O, my father, give me but her love and I will be your slave for ever! She is more than mortal."

"She *is* more than mortal," replied Cardenas, in his deep tones. "Listen, and I will tell you the history of her birth."

So speaking he extinguished the lamp, and in the starlight he told me; and as he unfolded the marvellous narrative, his voice, ever melodious, seemed to shape itself into a song, and as I listened I knew, be it truth or falsehood, he for one believed every word of the tale he told.

"Years ago, Philip Beauvais, I stood among the mountains of Spain, my native land. Night after night I gazed alone at the stars. I watched them from their first faint gleam at eve till their last faint gleam at morn. Not as an astronomer, seeking to win a little fame by foretelling the advent of a new comet; not to bring some distant speck of light, hitherto unnoticed, into the family of the planets. No: I, who by that time had proved that my spirit—my will—was stronger than any mortal's, said, as I watched, 'Amid that shining space there are myriads of spirits, free or embodied, and among those myriads there may be one whose power is not equal to mine; as I have swayed the spirits of men, so may I per-



"Cardenas advanced, and, taking her by the hand, led her towards me."—PAGE 47.

chance influence one spirit in the outer space and draw it unto me.' The thought may have been the thought of a madman, but nevertheless it took full possession of me, and day and night I concentrated every faculty of my mind to compass this one desire. I said, in answer to all objections my sober reason raised, 'As there are weak minds with mankind, so may there be weak spirits in space, whose powers, although far above the average of mankind, may be below my own, and one of these I may command.' So I waited and watched, until one night, when having sent my will forth in such a sustained effort I had well nigh fainted, *a thought spoke to my thought* and said, 'I am here! what wouldst thou have with me?' I knew I had conquered, and that one of the spirits of the stars was at my command. Then, *in thought*, I said, 'Come unto me in earthly shape, take the garb of mankind, and we will be ever together.' And I knew that the spirit said, 'I obey!' and left me for the time.

"Two nights afterwards there came to me, as I sat alone in my room, a beautiful woman, dressed after the manner of the peasants of Spain. She stood before me, crossed her hands upon her breast, and said, 'Master, I am come.' And I said to her, 'You will be mine and abide with me for ever, and teach me many things.' Then the woman wreathed her arms around me and said, 'Not for long, O love, but until this earthly frame is fretted away by the spirit it imprisons Till then I am thine.' And she lived with me and taught me things that no men know, or even hope to know; things that were I to give them to the world to-morrow would consign me to a madhouse. So different is the truth from the theory.

"Not for long did she stay with me; but ere she died, or departed,—call it which you will—she bore me a daughter, and then I knew I had not summoned her from her spirit home in vain, and that the birth of that daughter was an era in the history of the world. I said, 'I will guard this child as the apple of my eye. I will rear her in utter seclusion, as she will need no com-

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panion save the divine thoughts her origin will doubtless give her; and when the time comes I will seek a man worthy, as far as human being can be, to mate with her. Pure he must be and spotless, free from worldly taint, and clear of crime or bloodshed. A poet, it may be, with lofty thoughts and inspirations; and this man shall wed the Daughter of the Stars, and their offspring shall be the salt of the earth that shall leaven the whole. They shall be the poets, the musicians, the thinkers, the statesmen—nay, even the warriors of the earth, till war shall cease to be. In time a new race shall replace the old, and the regeneration of the world be accomplished!

“I have lived in many countries, and am far above the weakness of patriotism. History has told me that the trump that calls for progress and improvement in the order of things sounds first and loudest in England; therefore, as the maiden grew older I brought her here. Something I knew of you before we met, and now, knowing you as I do, I say to you to-night, ‘Philip Beauvais, you are the man I have chosen for the great work, and, moreover, for your own happiness.’”

As his voice, which in uttering the last sentence seemed like the voice of one inspired, sank into silence, he rested his head upon his arm, and again fixed his gaze on the stars above. For a moment I said nothing, and then, as the first of many eager questions trembled upon my lips, he broke into a sort of invocation, using the soft unknown tongue I have mentioned before. Then, turning to me, “Depart now,” he said; “ask nothing to-night. You have heard what mortal never heard. Depart, and be with me again to-morrow.”

I obeyed and left him: not to seek my home, but to wander miles and miles under the clear stars, turning the marvellous tale over and over in my mind. Strange as it may appear, I had little doubt as to its truth. I had always a dim kind of belief in the supernatural. Cardenas, to me, was a man gifted strangely beyond his fellows. I had myself experienced, both directly and indi-

rectly, the power of his will ; so that, in the present state of my mind, it scarcely needed the remembrance of the radiant, unearthly beauty of the maiden I had seen to induce me to accept his narrative as true. The only doubt that harassed me was whether I was worthy of the high destiny Cardenas had chosen me for, and whether I could win Astrœa's love. Weary at last with walking and thinking, I reached home, and, as the summer sun gathered heat, threw myself on my bed and fell into a profound sleep.

I need not say few hours elapsed, after my waking, ere I sought The Hermitage again. Juan showed me into the room, where, to my delight and surprise, I found Astrœa sitting alone. She greeted me without embarrassment ; I almost dared to think even with pleasure. Daylight made her if anything more beautiful. She wore no ornaments now, save the single diamond star, which beamed with a peculiar significance in my eyes to-day. "My father is engaged to-day," she said, "and has bade me entertain you : let us go through the gardens." With a beating heart I followed as she led the way, and that sweet afternoon will ever linger in my memory. We wandered beneath the grand old trees, we gathered the glowing roses, we chased, like children, the butterflies from flower to flower. We talked, and the pure fancies she clothed in words were rich with grace and inspiration. The poetry of her simple nature would perforce have made the most prosaic listener feel for once as poets feel. Judge then the effect her words and her beauty had on me. Then she led me to her room and sang strange songs to me. Such music was never heard on earth ; her fingers wandered over the keys, improvising as they went melodies fit for angelic choirs. The hours flew by, till, as the twilight gathered, I left her reluctantly, and more convinced than ever of the truth of the tale I had heard the night before.

And so I saw her day after day ; and each time she seemed more sweet, more radiant than the last. And then, how I know not, I learnt that my love was returned, and in burning words avowed the passion I felt. Hand in hand we stood before her

father, whilst, with a look of supreme joy in his dark eyes, he blessed us. Since the night I first met my beloved he had told me nothing more of her history, and I, knowing how deeply the recital had moved him, forebore to question him. Perhaps he saw clearly that matters were going exactly as he wished, and that I needed no incentive save *Astroëa's* supreme beauty and innocence to make me urge my suit when I saw a hope of success. Now that her lips as well as her clear and truthful eyes confessed the love she bore me, I begged Cardenas to permit our union without delay.

"My son," he said, "remember, you wed not only for your own happiness but for the good of the world. I have much to teach you yet—much that is good and noble. You must wait a year at least, and during that time be my pupil."

"I cannot," I cried. "A year is an age—what things may happen in the time. She may find how unworthy I am of her. One of us may die and we may be severed for ever."

And then, as I never prayed man before, I besought him to grant my request. He was for some time inexorable, but said at last, in reply to my entreaties, "I will do this for you. To-day I will wed you in spirit, a bond that is stronger than any earthly marriage or tie that man can make."

That night he called us to him, and led us to a chamber I had never entered before. It was situated at the top of the house, a portion of the roof of which had been removed and replaced by a sheet of glass, through which I could see the stars shining as brightly as though nothing intervened. The walls of the room were hung with a material like old tapestry: this completely covered the walls and even the door—as he parted the hangings like curtains to allow us to enter. At one end was a small structure draped with white velvet, which I knew, at once, was intended for a kind of altar. Opposite was a divan or couch covered with rich silk. With the exception of a bracket projecting from the wall and bearing a lamp, these were the only objects I noticed in the room. There was none of the machinery usually appertaining

to magicians and wonder-workers. He motioned *Astroea* to the couch and seated me on the ground beside her. My head leant against her arm and our fingers were interlaced. The maiden evinced no fear, but my heart, I am not ashamed to say, beat audibly. Cardenas then extinguished the light, and placed another lamp, or chafing dish, upon the altar. This was of curious shape and only threw enough light to make the outlines of objects visible. As I lay, intensely excited, with my hand clasped in *Astroea's*, I saw him sprinkle something on the flame. This, whatever it was, made little difference in its brilliancy, but soon a sweet odour gradually permeated the air, and whilst I was trying to remember whether it was the scent of anything I knew, he turned and fixed his eyes upon us with the same calm, stern glance that had so strangely affected me on the night we first met—Remember, in this narrative I endeavour to explain nothing, I risk no speculations, I hazard no theories; I am content simply to record events that happened—As Cardenas cast his eyes upon us I felt the maiden's fingers close round mine with a soft pressure; I seemed to be sinking into delicious sleep; nay, I can even remember closing my eyes, when, suddenly, all grew radiant around us, and I knew as if by inspiration that my spirit and my thoughts mingled with another's spirit and another's thoughts. Words fail in giving an idea of this blended existence. It seemed that we were near the altar, yet had the power of seeing the whole room in one glance, where, as I live, I could gaze upon our bodily forms lying as Cardenas had placed them, and wrapped in the deepest and most placid sleep. I heard marvellous strains of music; I heard mighty words of song meet for those harmonies; I saw the heavens above teeming with brilliant stars, as yet undreamt of, and it seemed that above the music and song a deep voice said, "For ever and for ever." How long this spirit consciousness and bodily oblivion lasted I know not, but at last it seemed that the music and the song grew fainter and far away; the heavens began to fade, and, little by little, the strange scent of the incense arose, and

again I seemed to sleep, but that second sleep was waking, for my senses returned, and I found Astroea's hands still clasping mine, the room lit by the lamp I had noticed at first, and Cardenas bending over us as if waiting for our awakening. We rose; and as I looked into my love's eyes, I knew that during our trance my thoughts and hers had been as one.

"Children," said Cardenas as he joined our hands once more, "remember, your spirits are as one. You may be parted on earth, but not in space. Sin by one is sin by the other. One cannot rise or fall without the other."

Then, trembling with awe, we passed under the upraised tapestry and spoke no more that night.

CHAPTER II.

Many and many a time, when I awoke of a morning, and, in my own home, saw only the common-place attributes of life around me, I said, "I have dreamed these wonderful things;" and then, as sleep left me and my full powers of thought came into play, I would lie and marvel at the mysteries now interwoven with my life. Regretting nothing: longing only for the hour to come when I might again see my spirit-bride, as I now called her: not, indeed, to her face, as by tacit consent we never mentioned the occurrences of that evening.

I saw her now less than before, as Cardenas insisted on my company for some hours every day. He was engaged, he said, in developing the full powers of my mind, and everything this strange man taught me at this period seemed to tend to one goal, the improvement of the human race. If his ideas were erratic, they were colossal; if his theories were false, they were magnificent. Men were eventually to become a race of demigods. Time he counted as nothing.

"True," he said, in reply to a question of mine, "that it may be a thousand years before the consummation; but what then? I

shall see nothing of my work in the flesh, but my spirit will see it. As the original progenitor of the Jews, call him Abraham for sake of argument, by the force of his own character stamped his race with peculiarities that keep it distinct from others, so shall the far more wonderful race we give the world alter the whole tone of mankind, and when the present puny creatures are extinct and forgotten, my descendants will look back and honour me as the god from whom they sprung."

And I, rightly or wrongly, sat at this man's feet and believed; the months passed on, the dead leaves fell from the trees and winter came upon us; every sign of the fleeting year was welcomed by me as bringing me so much nearer to the day when the master should declare the probation to be at an end.

In February I received some tidings from my father's country, France, that changed the whole tenour of my life. A relative died, and I was found to be entitled to some considerable property on his death. It was absolutely necessary I should go to Paris to establish my identity, but I greatly disliked the idea of the journey. So linked were my love and my teacher with my life by this time, I dreaded even a few days' separation. It was Cardenas himself who prevailed upon me at last to undertake the journey.

"My son," he said, "remember you have yet to play an important part on the stage of the world. Sweet as the repose of our present life is, it may be well for you not to forget the existence of mankind. Go. Astroea and I will watch every day for your return."

And so, with a heart foreboding evil, I went. How strange it seemed to me, after the events of the last few months, to step into the every-day world again; how prosaic ordinary men and women seemed in comparison with my late companions. Wherever I might be, my thoughts flew back to the house that held my beautiful spirit-bride and her wonderful father. Everything else seemed dull and commonplace in my eyes, and ardently I longed for the time when I might be at liberty to rejoin them. Much to my

annoyance, the business that called me to Paris was protracted; and when at length I began to see the end of it, the event occurred that has been fatal to my life's happiness. Simply to kill the weary hours, I visited, one evening, some place of amusement—a sort of ball I believe it was; and as I leant, lonely and pre-occupied, against the wall of the room, watching, but not thinking of the dancers, something in my manner gave offence to a Frenchman who had drank enough wine to make him quarrelsome. The quarrel, however it arose, was nothing but an encounter between a drunken bully and a contemptuous sober man; but a blow passed, and a meeting was peremptorily claimed. Being half a Frenchman myself, I could scarcely have avoided it had I wished to; and having always been skilful with the foils, had little inclination to baulk my insulter, and feared less as to the result of the duel. We met the day but one after the quarrel, and I, who had never struck a blow in anger since I was a boy, found, upon crossing swords with my antagonist, and seeing the vengeful look in his sullen eyes, the lust for blood rise within me. For the first few minutes I was hardly pressed, and, being unused to fighting in earnest, wild and flurried; but soon I grew calm, and fought well and steadily. My opponent was an accomplished swordsman; yet, how I know not, one of my passes went through his guard, and he fell dead at my feet.

I felt but little remorse. The man had fastened an unsought quarrel upon me, and, as I learnt before the engagement, was a well-known duellist. I felt sad that a man's life should be cut short as I should have felt had I seen him killed in a railway accident; but I laid no blame to myself that he had fallen by my hand. He had insulted me, he had challenged me, and I was fighting for my own life. So confident did I feel of being in the right that I refused to fly across the frontier, electing to stand my trial. The insult had been so marked, the provocation so great, that the court acquitted me. As soon as I was released I travelled as fast as I could to England, and reached my home late at night,

longing for the morning to break, that I might again see Astroea and forget all troubles and annoyances in her love. I was very anxious, as strange to say, since the duel I had received no communication from her, whilst up to that time letters had reached me each day. I had written to apprise her of my return, so was scarcely surprised to hear, late as it was, that Cardenas was waiting for me in the library.

I found him in a thoughtful attitude, his head resting on his hand, his brows contracted: eagerly I advanced to greet him, with words of tender solicitude upon my lips. Waiving my proffered hand aside, he rose.

"Away!" he cried, "there is blood upon that hand."

I staggered back, when gazing upon me with a stern yet sorrowful expression, he said,

"Philip Beauvais, you have shed human blood in anger. We meet no more."

Distractedly I endeavoured to justify myself, but all my words were unavailing.

"Right or wrong," he said, "I care not; a man's life lies at your door, and with that life passes the lot for which I had destined you."

Till that moment it had never entered my thoughts that his idiosyncrasy would lead him to dream of severing Astroea and myself, but as the truth flashed across me, all light and hope seemed to leave the world. I cast myself at his feet; implored and wept. I conjured him by the love he bore his daughter, by the love he bore me, not to part us; but the only answer I could get was, "It may not be; your hands are stained with blood, so you are no mate for the Daughter of the Stars."

Driven to desperation, I cried, "Not only for myself, but for her I plead. She loves me; yea, and our spirits are one, linked together by your power, and your own lips said that nought could sever them."

He paused, and said—not so much by way of reply, but as one

communing with himself—"I think not; my power may be waning with increasing years, but it may yet be strong enough to keep your souls apart."

"But I will see her again," I exclaimed; "I will see her, even if I have to force an entrance into her chamber."

Ever calm, he replied, "Leave this place to-morrow, and return in a week's time, and it may be you shall be admitted."

In vain I begged some word that hope might live on: all he would say was, "Come in a week's time." And then, with a sad but kindly look on me, he departed.

Obedient to his command, I spent the next week wearily in a dull city; and when the stipulated time had passed, with beating heart stood once more before the gate of The Hermitage.

My summons was answered by an old woman, who informed me, as I listened calm with despair, that Cardenas had left his residence four days ago; she believed, not to return.

I reached my home somehow and threw myself on my bed, from which I never rose for a month. The mental strain and grief combined brought on so severe an illness that for days I lay at the point of death. When I recovered—aye, even before I recovered—I commenced the quest of my life—a quest that even now is unfulfilled. I, first of all, sought the owner of The Hermitage, and enquired as to the whereabouts of his late tenant, and was informed that Cardenas had simply paid the rent to the end of his lease and quitted, leaving no address. By the aid of a detective I traced them to Calais, and there the scent failed. Then I left England, and for three long years sought them through every large town of Europe. I lavished large sums in engaging skilled police assistance, and fainter and fainter my hopes grew with every report of failure. I fancied it possible that Cardenas might bring *Astroea* forth from her seclusion, so if I heard of the advent of any genius in the artistic or literary world, any new poetess, artist or singer who was taking the world by storm, I hurried to the scene of her triumph to convince myself she was not *Astroea*, my

spirit-bride. I lived for the one object of regaining her, and with travel, search, false hopes and chilling failures the years passed. One day, having to wait for a few hours in the old town of Rouen, as I walked in my usual aimless manner through the narrow streets, I came face to face with the man I had sought so far and wide. My heart leapt in my breast, and eagerly I sprang forward to hold him lest he should seek to escape me. This action was needless, as he evidently had no intention of evading me. He knew me at once and stopped, and I, for some moments, could say nothing; only stand and gaze at him, wondering if my good fortune was true. I could not help noticing he looked older and more careworn; but the intellect shone clearly as ever in his face, and his wonderful dark eyes still conveyed the impression of power and lordship over his fellows. He spoke first, and strangely the melodious voice of old thrilled me.

"You have sought me for three years," he said, "and now you find me. What would you?"

"Astroëa, my bride," I said, wildly.

"Poor boy," he said, with an air of compassion, "and you have suffered. Does the dream I bade you dream linger yet? Can you not forget?"

"Never. Let me but see her once, and I will rest content for years."

With calm pity, he said, "Would you be happier in remembering her as one who loved you, or as one who has forgotten your existence?"

"Let me but see her," was my only reply, and my heart beat wildly as I fancied I saw him relenting.

"Follow me, then," he said, "but indulge in no vain hopes, for I say that the poles of the earth are not further apart than you two will ever be."

In silence I followed him, and soon we entered a large old house, and he showed me into a room on the first floor, where, near the window, sat Astroëa. Her beauty to my famished eyes seemed

more glorious than ever, and with a cry of rapture I sprang forward to clasp her to my heart, but stopped short upon seeing her recoil with a look of unmistakable affright in those eyes that had ever before grown more radiant at my approach. It needed no more than this to tell me she did not even recognise me. As I stood spell-bound, with extended hands, Cardenas came forward, and speaking in the purest French, said:—

“My daughter, this gentleman believes you to be an old acquaintance of his. Vainly have I assured him he is mistaken, but only from your own lips will he be convinced.”

She made me a proud courtesy, and the words, “Monsieur is entirely in error; I have never seen him before,” smote upon my heart like the death-knell of that hope which alone made life endurable to me.

Thus speaking, she passed me with the evident intention of quitting the apartment; but I seized her hand, and gazed long and deeply into her eyes. At first they met mine with a firm, steady glance; yet as I gazed I saw a troubled expression rise in their clear depths, even as though memory was striving to re-assert her reign, but as my hope took form she withdrew her hand hastily and left us.

Mad in my rage, I turned upon Cardenas and cursed him.

“It is a juggle,” I cried. “You have stolen her memory of my love from her. She could never forget nor be false to me.”

My angry words provoked no answering warmth on his part; he only said, sadly,

“I would have spared you this, but you were sure to discover us some day, and it was well you should learn the truth at once.”

“What is the truth—she loves me no more?”

“Listen, Philip. When I found you were no longer fitted to be my son I bade you leave me, and I carried my daughter away that you might meet no more. As you sorrowed for her, so she sorrowed for you, and then I bade her forget the past. You, who know my power of old, will believe when I say that at my com-

mand that portion of her life vanished from her memory, and all those months we spent together are to her a blank. Do you doubt?"

"No," I said, "but give me oblivion likewise."

"I cannot," he replied, "I have not sway over you to that extent."

"But our spirit-union?" I asked.

I fancied he seemed troubled as he replied, "That was all nonsense; a mesmeric trance they call it, in which no doubt you dreamed strange things."

I said no more, and sick at heart at the result of my interview with Astroëa, left him, noting carefully the house and the street, but utterly uncertain as to what future line of action to take.

That night, as I lay sleepless, vivid to my mind came the recollection of the mysterious ceremony in the tapestried room. I felt Astroëa's fingers entwined with mine, my head resting on her arm. I saw the white draped altar, and before it the tall, commanding figure of Cardenas. It seemed to me that even the perfume of the strange incense was in the air; and as the scene rose again before me I cried, "O sweet, my bride, come to me, for are not our souls for ever united!"

And then I knew that her spirit was with me, and that mine went forth to meet it. And all seemed joy, and we two were together once more. Her thoughts my thoughts, and my thoughts hers. Our existence one. Let our bodies be far apart, our spirits, free from the trammels of the flesh, could meet and wander forth at will. Let him who reads say, "a dream;" I care not. It was no dream, nor was dream ever like unto this. Let science, now or hereafter, attempt to explain the mystic intercourse we held; for me it is sufficient to know that in the depth of that night her soul sought mine, and, together, we wandered, or floated forth under the clear stars. No words, as far as the world understands them, passed between us; but plain as the letters my pen now forms on the paper before me could I read in some mysterious way each

thought of hers, and, as I read them, knew that my answering thoughts were clear to her. I can only make myself at all understood by saying we spoke in thought; that our spirit converse that night contained little but the renewal of our unalterable love; and as we passed beneath the luminous stars, shining, to our spirit-sight, with a radiancy unknown to human eyes—as the moon above, to us an orb of dazzling silver, clothed the world beneath us in light and shadow, we knew our destinies were linked for all time.

I cannot tell the duration of our intercourse that night. It must have been measured by hours, as I can well remember watching the moon sink into a bank of clouds on the horizon—clouds that to bodily eyes may have been dark, but which to us were glorious with veiled light—and then the morning star arose in splendour; and then, as once before, all things seemed to fade as I felt I was sinking into sleep, only to awake with the sun high overhead.

O, the joy I felt as I recalled the events of that night! I knew that *Astroëa's* love, could the cloud that lay over her memory be lifted, was mine yet. Well I knew I had dreamed no dream; but, marvellous as it might be, we had, free from all fetters that would restrain us, held mystic communion that night. I felt no fear, no awe—joy alone at the strength of the bond that bound us together. I wondered if I had power to summon her at will; yet dare not try, fearing she might suffer untold agony if a stronger power than mine withstood her. “I will wait,” I said, “and my beloved will come to me at her own time. Some day I may learn what power is mine; now I will only wait and hope.”

I thought I would try and see her again, for now she might know me, and, perhaps, in spite of her father's wish, would follow me to the ends of the earth. I had no difficulty in finding the house, but was peremptorily denied admission. In vain I offered large bribes; the servant was faithful to his trust, “*Monsieur* was away, and his orders were distinct.” I left the house and longed

for the night to come, hoping we might meet again. Alas! it was not so. Neither in the many hours I waited and watched, nor in the few hours I slept did she come.

The next day I sought the house once more, and in the servant's face read, before he spoke, the words, "Monsieur has departed—I know not where."

Although fearing that further search would be vain, I resumed the life I had been leading for the last three years and wandered from town to town, ever hoping that Cardenas might cross my path again—a hope as yet ungratified.

And yet I am not unhappy. Again and again she has been with me. I know not when she is coming, yet suddenly I am aware that her spirit is with me and calls for mine. O, the rapture of those meetings! We wander forth over the face of the earth. We float through the dark pine forests of the north and the glowing wildernesses of the tropics. We see the grandeur of mighty mountains and the sweetness of peaceful valleys. We pass, at will, through great cities, over fruitful plains or arid deserts. We watch the bending of the Southern Cross, or the moon glimmering white on regions of untrodden snow. We cross the deep seas and seek fair islands unknown to man. Space to us is nothing. The world and all its glories—yea, even the heavens are ours. We hear strains of wondrous music, and ours are the secrets of the stars.

Not only at night does she seek me now. Even in the sunlight, with the busy world around, she calls for me, and I obey her summons. And then I am told I have lain for hours in a trance, motionless and scarcely breathing, and men look upon me as one whom Death may claim at any moment—I, who laugh at their fears and pray that the same sweet trance may be mine again to-morrow.

And, latterly, she has sought me more frequently, and I know that her spirit grows more joyful. Can it be that the power that parts us is waning? That age is stealing the force from that

strange and resolute mind that decreed her waking hours to be void of all recollection of our love? That, eventually, all the dominion he holds over her will be gone, his sway broken; and in her glorious beauty she will come to me in body, as in spirit, and, standing before me, whisper, "I am here!" when the bitterness of the past shall fade in the light of the love glowing in her radiant eyes?

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O, Astroea! Daughter of the Stars! My spirit-bride! I wait—
I long for that hour. Let it be soon!





Whom to see at the Theatre.

BY FREDERICK WEDMORE,

AUTHOR OF "STUDIES IN ENGLISH ART" AND "PASTORALS OF FRANCE."

THAT exaggerated admiration of the foreigner which is the particular weakness and folly of the semi-fashionable English playgoer—and which has allowed to the affectations of Rossi and the pallid virtues of Madame Modjeska, eminently respectable as far as they go, a success only second to that accorded to the genius of Sarah Bernhardt or of Aimée Desclée—has fortunately been no effectual barrier to the appearance on the London stage during the last few years of more than a usual number of native actors of peculiar worth. But it must be at times a little vexatious for the native actor and student, this too credulous admiration of the cosmopolitan player who takes London in the middle of a starring tour that begins at Bucharest and ends at Honolulu, and who is hardly sufficiently aware that the value of his conception, whatever that may be, of Hamlet or Othello, is at all events difficult to gauge by reason of his imperfect possession of the gift of tongues. With one fact, however, the native artist may comfort himself, when, having studied hard for years of uphill work in the provinces and London, he finds himself confronted by the successful rivalry of some sudden apparition from San Francisco or Barcelona, and that is that the encouragement granted to the foreigner is too furious for long continuance. The fashion wanes. The stranger, who was important because he was novel, and was great because he was in part incomprehensible, returns after a year or two, and there is nobody to give heed. Some other sensation, duly provided with letters of introduction to Society, has taken the place that was his, and is discovered to have all the merits that he

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thought were peculiar to himself. Meanwhile the native artist has been plodding on, his position much the same as before—a little better, if anything. It has occurred by this time, perhaps, to a sufficient number of people that Shakespeare's fellow-countryman may now conceivably know something of Shakespeare's creations, even though the expression of his views on an English poet does not happen to be interestingly impeded by a limited control over the English tongue.

Roughly then, the first answer to the question, "Whom to see at the Theatre?" comes to be this, "See Englishmen, and distrust the transient babble about strange names." But the answer must include also due recognition of the foreigners who have brought us their own vivid pictures of the life they have lived amongst, and really know, or keenly sympathise with. To have seen such an actress as Aimée Desclée in the *Visite de Noces* is to have had a new experience of the world; to have seen Sarah Bernhardt in the *Jean Marie* of M. Theuriet is to have had an insight into the poetry of remote places; to have seen Hélène Petit in *L'Assommoir* is to have seen the poetry of poverty in great cities. And then there is the wild hilarity of the French comic actors, revelling in the bread eaten in secret—the bread of which it is generally question at the Palais Royal. Lastly, perhaps, there is the high tragedy of the Signora Ristori: only it is now too late in the day to speak of it.

Mr. Irving is the most conspicuous amongst the English actors who have patiently bided their time, while the public was suffering from a severe attack of admiration of the foreigner. It is true that he had risen step by step in his profession, and had, as it were, put the very crown on his career by a performance of *Hamlet*, not so much successful as triumphant, before he began to feel the effect of foreign competition. But, contemporaneous with the public raving over the athletic *physique* of Salvini and with the more limited appreciation of the supple tenderness of Rossi, came one or two performances of Irving's, less assured and decisive—in one case even less happy—than others that had gone before it; and for a moment, whatever it may have seemed to Mr. Irving, it seemed to his admirers a doubtful thing how far he could keep or regain that hold upon the public which *Hamlet* had undeniably made. An influential criticism, always independent, but at that time less mature than it has since become, pronounced his *Macbeth* a failure. *Macbeth* was not a failure at all: it was an unappreciated success.

Some of the best acting that Irving has given us was to be seen in his assumption of that part, and it is very noteworthy that as the impersonation proceeded it gained in power and authority; nothing in the whole was finer than the final fight—nothing more splendidly reckless, more purely fatalist. Of *Othello*—to name my own opinion only—I thought quite differently. It was curiously unequal, and its inequality was strangely disappointing. To me—though I say it with diffidence—the actor never seemed to rise to the solemnity of the part. As the occasion grew tragic, the tragedian grew feeble.

Nearly all that was doubtful, however, at that moment, about Mr. Irving's future, has been satisfactorily solved. Airily in *The Belle's Stratagem*, grimly in *Richard the Third*, he has confirmed his possession of those gifts of humour and satire which the *Two Roses* first made it visible that he possessed. Never getting rid of what are called his "mannerisms," but persuading the public to permanently accept them, he has repeated, it is difficult to say how often or how successfully, his great tragic parts, here and there with the deterioration that may come of satiety, but often with improvement and always with artistic care. He has become a leader among managers, capable himself of initiating, yet nearly always getting the best advice and generally taking it. As an actor, his art is so thoroughly acquired and ripe, that we need not for a good many years look for any marked change in it. Those who know his acting the best have ceased to expect surprises, but still nothing short of a very minute observation of its exercise can free the playgoer from the probability of astonishment. The actor is sure to be varied, though it may be within limits which students of kindred work have pretty well succeeded in defining.

Of the younger actors aspiring to act tragedy—and the tragedy of Shakespeare—I place Charles Warner as distinctly the first. There is a certain electrical quality in Irving, in his best moments, of which Irving alone possesses the secret. It is part of his individuality. It follows, therefore, as a matter of course, that Charles Warner has not got it. But Warner has, nevertheless, the gift of passion, and passion of a massive kind. There are persons who like his *Othello* better than any other now on the stage. It is profound and sincere, and at need duly solemn. The expression of feeling is aided by the actor's possession of a voice that is strong, musical, and flexible. The last few years have wrought in Mr.

Warner, in Mr. Warner's means as well as in his employment of them, an immense advance, quite apart from the startling and exceptional success of *Coupeau*. Indeed it is not to any repetition of such a success as that of *Coupeau* that the actor should look forward. His would not be the first instance in which an extraordinary publicity, acquired in melodrama, had been used as the introduction to a more legitimate art. The experiment of last winter, at Sadler's Wells, will have to be repeated. With a continuance of careful self-training the success of his *Othello* may be even extended. In other great parts in the Shakespearian drama we may see him fresh, vigorous, and spontaneous. Whatever be his deficiencies, his permanent relapse into the acting of melodrama would be a misfortune and a mistake. The legitimate drama which he has the ambition to undertake, the poetical drama which he feels,—these give him his best scope, though, as far as Shakespeare is concerned, it is most likely that he will always succeed more completely in embodying characters that are above all things emotional, than in appearing in parts in which it is intellectual subtlety that predominates. *Macbeth* and *Othello* are for him without question; *Hamlet*, *Iago*, and *Richard* might prove less suitable tasks.

There are very few of our younger actors—are there, indeed, certainly any?—of whom the kind of hopes that have been expressed of Mr. Warner, may be at all confidently entertained. Just as the immense extension of Art Education, or, to be more accurate, of teaching in the mere technicalities of draughtsmanship, has failed thus far to endow us with any exceptional number of first rate painters, though it may have added to the array of fairly accomplished ones, so the increased social favour bestowed upon the stage, has not given us fresh actors of genius, though it has furnished the boards with a far more abundant supply of presentable “walking gentlemen.” A crowd of ladies and of well-bred young men are seeking—any theatrical manager will tell us—a footing on the London stage. Complete training, from the beginning, is so essential on the stage, that they are sometimes at a discount; but where a peculiarity of gifts allows them to cope successfully with those children of the stage, native to the theatre, and born, so to say, between the scenes of a pantomime, they have, of course, an advantage in a higher social culture. And their humbler comrades recognise this. Lately, at a provincial theatre, there were present, amongst others, at the rehearsal of an old-world comedy of high

life, a strange gentlewoman who had taken to the stage, and an estimable and dowdy professional of many years standing and many years failure, and her daughter from whom much was hoped. The daughter, examining critically the movements of the strange gentlewoman, exclaims to her mother, "Look at her! Why can't I bow like that? That's fifty times better than I can do it though I was born at the theatre." "Of course, my dear," answers the mother, with a naïve credulousness as to the continuance, down to our own day, of eighteenth century ceremonies; "of course, my dear, *she belongs to the people who are always bowing.*"

But the remains of social prejudice, not to speak of the disadvantage of the want of earliest familiarity with the "wings," the "float," and the exits "opposite prompter," have prevented many gentlewomen from passing from private life into the circles of the stage. It is chiefly in young men of gentle birth and public school training that the stage is getting rich. It is these that tend to banish from stage drawing-rooms of to-day the "Adelphi guests" of old time—gentlemen who deemed themselves equipped for the parties of a political Marchioness when provided with white waistcoats, white cotton gloves, and the greasy dress-coat of a Holywell Street tailor. But the fashion for including the Stage, along with Church and Bar and Civil Service, as a profession of possible choice, has not prevailed long enough to give us any accession of quite first rate actors. It is in the rank and file, of West-end play-houses, that some change is seen. And at bottom I am somewhat sceptical as to the new class from which recruits for the Stage are drawn furnishing the men who will be the Field-Mmarshals of the Future. Besides, it must be remembered that before it became as common as it is now, for young men of breeding to become players, an irresistible impulse brought on the boards the few who were fittest for them. Several of these men—Mr. Bancroft, Mr. Hare, Mr. Kendal, Mr. Arthur Cecil, for instance—have long been popular favourites. Practically, it is only upon the rank and file—upon the not peculiarly gifted—that the change will tell. The interesting and admirable actors who have just been named, have—with only one exception—been popular favourites for a dozen years, and as for Mr. Arthur Cecil, he leapt rather suddenly into a prominent place.

It is his own talent, sooner or later, that decides what rank shall be taken by an actor. His talent, rendered more or less

acceptable by his manner, his looks, his personality, is that which measures for him his success. With actresses it is otherwise. Externals always count for something at the theatre—and how, indeed, should they not?—but it is in the case of actresses that they count for most. Beauty is capital. On the stage it gives refreshment to the people who fairly expect that their eyes, as well as their judgment, shall welcome the Shakespearian heroine and the soubrette of Sheridan. It goes a long way towards making the suitability of an actress for her rôle; and, for my part, I think it is rather an affectation when it is wholly omitted from the calculations of professional criticism. An actor or actress has no right to be over sensitive to remarks on *physique*. His *physique* is his matériel. It constitutes much of his capacity. He may justly be presumed to have taken account of it himself when he elected for the theatre. The actress knew what was her capital when she decided for the stage instead of for the work of a schoolmistress or for the routine of a premature domesticity. You have nothing to do with the *physique* of your painter, your writer, or your sculptor. The artist may be hare-lipped, and the poet blind. Their personality may be next to nothing to you. But it is different with the actor. The actor, and yet more particularly the actress, depends for an appreciable measure of his effect upon the fact that his presence gives you pleasure. It is, of course, a part of his talent to make the most of that presence. The aid of various exercises, the aid of gymnastics and riding, as well as the aid of tradesmen who are very artful and very confidential, must be called in continually to preserve youth. The now shrivelled youth of the admirable Delaunay, of the Français, was for a score of years scrupulously guarded. It was one of his favourite resources to run alongside of the omnibus from his suburban home on his way to the theatre. It was necessary that the stage veteran of five and fifty should retain the agility of eighteen. And here it may be said, in parenthesis, that on the whole the life of the stage is favourable to the retention of youth. So little of the professional work is sedentary. The mental labour, except perhaps during a period of constant rehearsals, can hardly be exhausting. The muscles are brought into play. The lungs are brought into play.

As regards actresses, there have always been two classes, though the distinction has been more perceptible since the popularisation of *opera bouffe*, burlesque, and light spectacles of all kinds—the

distinction between the actress whose whole claim to favour resides in her good looks, whose "beauty" is as much her "sole duty" as it was to the "Pretty Woman" of Robert Browning's poem, and the actress whose beauty, if she has it, is a legitimate aid to her, but who is before all things an intellectual and emotional person—the practitioner of an art. Happily there are a good many instances of the actresses of the one class developing into the actresses of the other. The example constantly before them, and the spirit of emulation, tend a good deal to this; and yet more, perhaps, the consciousness which must be possessed by every woman of average or common intelligence, that the time is brief, and the days numbered, in which it may suffice for her attractions to be those of freshness, colour, and line—the attractions of the rose and of the daffodil. We are thankful, however, for the rose and the daffodil, in the brief days when we can get them, and I do not think we should be favoured with too many lay sermons on the degradation of the Stage, because a fair proportion of guardsmen have preferred, after dinner, the mild enjoyments of the Gaiety Theatre to the brain-puzzling exercises of its severer rivals. It may be left for others to take exception to that gentle irresolution which seems to possess Miss Kate Vaughan, when she is on the point of plaintively beginning a dance she is too languid to finish. And if Miss Connie Gilchrist is not precisely a comedian of brilliant or profound intellect, it may be remembered that her grace and "go," her balanced head, and her harmonious colours, golden and brown, suggested to an artist very sensitive to beautiful things a portrait of slim youth at least as successful as it was audacious. Criticism of these ladies resolves itself into appreciation of picturesque effects—not of intellectual performances.

But generally a strong individuality, any love of art, pricks on its possessor to more extended efforts. Actresses like Mrs. Kendal, like Miss Ellen Terry, like Miss Roselle, like Miss Eastlake—she is the newest of the serious heroines of the drama in London—use such physical gifts as they may chance to have, in the service of a profession that gives ample room for them. All these actresses are thoroughly individual. Not uninfluenced of course by what has been done before, they yet have a fresh way of their own of looking at any given situation. One or two of them are highly inventive—almost as inventive as their senior, Mrs. Bancroft, who in pure comedy, or in comedy touched with pathos, is still unex-

celled. All are graceful and suitable, and one or two are powerful exponents of the emotions it is their business to pourtray. The art of Mrs. Kendal is of wide range and of extraordinary freedom. Even within the last year or two it has developed, and it is many years now since the Bristol playgoer was able to note—and I hope had the wit to note—the extraordinary promise of Madge Robertson's girlish performances. The thing has happened which I remember was then somewhat diffidently prophesied, and Mrs. Kendal—the little *Cinderella* of the Bristol pantomime of 1864, and the waiting-maid, I think, to Miss Kate Terry's *Beatrice*—has become the leading actress of the day, the actress most capable of swaying a crowd, of making them (as the *Money Spinner* showed only yesterday) sympathise with the undeserving as well as with the deserving. For many years now, Mrs. Kendal's acting has suggested at need either the genial shrewdness of a woman of the world or the naïve surprise of *Galatea*. In reality it was the same power that was the basis of both suggestions, for *Galatea*, though endowed with poetical moments, was not wholly poetical. The marble had not been flesh and blood very long before it betrayed Mrs. Kendal's own extraordinary relish for comedy and the funny side of things, and the funny side of love was the subject of *Galatea's* almost earliest meditations. Mrs. Kendal, though far too intelligent to fail in poetry, is before all things an actress of modern life and an exponent of modern character. She is so practised an actress that she contrives to get the very fullest effects out of the worn-out tawdriness of the *Lady of Lyons*—dramatic situations in florid verse. Her *Lady of Lyons* throws a *parterre* into tears. And she is so clever a woman that her *Rosalind* is brilliant and gay even where it misses what the ideal *Rosalind* would not fail to give it. But in the emotions of modern life—in the part of the suffering woman betrayed into wrong, as in the *Money Spinner*, or the wronged woman goaded to despair, as in *Charity*—she is supreme. Nobody else—not even Miss Roselle, who at her best is distinctly next to her in parts like these—has quite Mrs. Kendal's breadth and largeness and unfaltering effect. And relieving the depths of her gloom, is the peculiar sunniness of her comedy. Her women of the world are absolutely good natured; too tolerant to be easily disturbed; too intelligent to be ever imposed upon.

Only a year before Miss Madge Robertson, a school girl, was

playing *Cinderella* in the Bristol Pantomime, Miss Ellen Terry was likewise in Bristol—a blonde child, not quite certain, I suppose, whether to gambol or whether to learn her part from Lacy's acting edition, in the open spaces of Queen Square, near to the old theatre in the middle of the city. A career far more broken by vicissitude than that of Mrs. Kendal,—first a shorter and then a longer withdrawal from the stage,—has nevertheless resulted in giving to Miss Ellen Terry a position only second to Mrs. Kendal's. She is an actress of simpler but not, I think, of quite such potent pathos; she is an actress of studiously graceful bearing and of poetical effect. In *Ophelia*—which years ago was a triumph for her sister, Miss Kate Terry—Miss Ellen Terry has produced one of her strongest impressions. The part is so easy to spoil that not to have failed in it is already a success. And Miss Ellen Terry delighted many. The greater tragical parts seem closed to her: at all events the day has not come yet for her to try *Lady Macbeth*, and we have not seen her as *Juliet*. Perhaps her true line—the ground she covers absolutely, leaving nothing else to be desired—is to be found in the first act of *The Cup*; and in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, in the scene where Olivia takes leave of the little ones; and in *Masks and Faces*, where the tenderness of the simple wife best comes out. But Miss Ellen Terry has, also, her true touch in comedy. Her hoyden is an individual one. And *The Belle's Stratagem*, with its dash of bravado, is a piece in which she is welcome.

A performance this last summer, at the Princess's Theatre, made it possible to compare in an interesting way the methods of the two actresses remaining to be noticed, Miss Amy Roselle and Miss Eastlake. On the occasion of the revival of *The Old Love and the New*, there fell to Miss Eastlake the character of the heroine, which eighteen months before had been allotted to Miss Roselle. I am not here to vex myself with speaking of what it is pleasant to ignore—the failures of the stage—I have limited too closely the list of players to be mentioned, to be obliged to do that, and both. Miss Roselle and Miss Eastlake deserve warm praise. But their methods are very different, their gifts very different. Miss Roselle has more of authority and decisiveness, more tragic passion, and more influential merriment. She carries the playgoer with her into many places of her art. A little self-consciousness, a little staginess, which she shares with too many of her comrades, is in

her own case made hardly noticeable by reason of the variety of her resources and of her real power. Miss Eastlake is simpler and less practised, has only but now, as it were, had her first great chance, for a promising *début*, which made us hope for much some four or five years ago, was followed by a succession of parts none of which could bring out her best qualities, and then by a period of retirement only recently ended. For modern tragedy—and her part of Lilian in *The Old Love and the New* is modern tragedy—she has as yet shown no complete capacity. Perhaps her *physique* may be unequal to the last requirements of great tragic situations. At all events the climax of passion is somehow not quite reached by her. But the fact that, in the popular eye, her effects do not rival those of actresses of different calibre and rougher fibre, should not blind the playgoer who likes to see a new thing sensitively done, to the truth that that is what he will see if he sees Miss Eastlake. In her acting, if the chords are not always very full, no note jars upon you. Her simplicity and tenderness are of the most natural, the most unconventional kind. To see Miss Eastlake on the stage in trouble, is to see how things happen, how troubles are taken, in refined life. In such company there is great charm. After all, it is the charm of pleasant individuality which—analyse as we will—is often the beginning and the end of what men care for in the extremely personal, the extremely individual, art of acting.



THE GOLDEN PAGE OF YOUTH.

Words by HUGH CONWAY.

Music by JOSEPH L. ROECKEL.

a tempo.
p She

Andantino.
espress., ma largamente.
p

rall.
p
a tempo.

sat and read in the shad - ed room, Far a - way were her thoughtful

f
eyes, Till one cried gai - ly "The world's a-bloom, Come forth and grace it, O

f

con anima.

maid - en wise! Come forth! the blos - soms, the birds en - treat; And

con anima.

le - gends quaint of times long fled Will seem more sweet with

f rall. p

flowers at our feet, And the broad, blue sky o - ver - head."..... Ah

f rall. p

p Allegretto.

me! ah me! the books of age Are sad with so - ber truth; But

p leggiero.

cres. *f*

bright are the lines that light the page, The gold - en page of

cres. *f*

rit. *f tempo lmo.*

youth,..... The gold - en page of youth!

colla parte. *f*

rall. *a tempo.*

p

Read - ing to - ge - ther, how close - ly drew Sun - ny locks to locks of

p

naively.

brown; Their hands were holding the book, 'tis true, But the page, a - las, was

colla parte.

f con anima.

up - side down! Yet the sweet - est tale e - ver said or sung They

f

p

learned by heart, in some mys - tic way; The tale that was young when the

p

cres. *f* *rall.* *p*

world was young. And dear - est to youth to - day!..... Ah

cres. *f* *rall.*

p Allegretto.

me! ah me! the books of age Are sad with so-ber truth; But

p leggiero.

cres. *f*

bright are the lines that light the page, The gold - en page of

cres. *f*

ff *rit.* *ff*

youth,..... The gold - en page of youth !.....

ff *rit.* *ff Vivace.*

8va.....

fff



With Lance and Sword.

BY F. E. WEATHERLY.



HE wind is high, the moon is bright,
The river swiftly flowing,
The troopers need no beacon light
To show the way they're going.
No wind no rain can blind their eyes,
No tide can break their order,
While she they love a captive lies,
Across the Scottish border.

Shall she wed an English lord ?
Shall she droop and die ?
While here's a lance and here's a sword
To give him their reply.

Death-white beneath her bridal veil
She kneels before the altar !
But hark ! what makes the bridegroom pale,
What makes the maiden falter ?
A shout : a gleam of steel-clad men :
A burst of wild disorder,
And she they love is safe again
Across the Scottish border.

Shall she wed an English lord ?
Shall she droop and die ?
Hurrah ! hurrah ! for lance and sword
That gave him their reply.



*"While here's a lance and here's a sword
To give him their reply."—PAGE 80.*



Haunted.

BY F. E. WEATHERLY.

NOTE.—What I have endeavoured to show in these lines is that remorse, following on a murderous wish, and on the accidental accomplishment of that wish, may positively ripen into the conviction of actual guilt.

ROW! row! row! morning and noon and night,
And it's floating, floating, floating, never out of my
sight,
Look! don't you see it, sir? Out in the moonlight there,
With its white, white eyelids closed and the beautiful long brown
hair.

It's my wife, sir, my little wife. I left her there to drown.
But she floats, floats for ever, and she won't, she won't go down.
And the river rises from Kingroad and the wind blows from the sea,
But to and fro, to and fro, she drifts 'longside of me.
And the river falls and the tide flows out, but 'twill not carry her
down,
It's my wife, sir, my little wife. I left her there to drown.

You think I'm mad or fond, or just a bit drunk, may be,
I'm only a poor old man. You needn't be 'feared of me,
Step in and sit in the stern, sir; the steamer won't be long,
We'll just drop down and wait where the stream don't run so strong.
Out of the sight of it, out of the sight of it, just for a little while,
For the long hair clings to the boat, and the lips have a ghastly
smile.

Ay! ay! ay! but she follows me even yet,
Does she think that I've forgotten? Does she think I shall ever
forget?

F

When ever, ever, ever, morning and noon and night
She's floating, floating, floating, never out of my sight.

I was so fond of her—once—in the old, old innocent days,
With her simple loving heart and her tender trustful ways.
So proud of her too with her brown, brown eyes, and beautiful hair ;
Five years we were one together in the little house up there.
Troubles we had, plenty ; for life must be hard, I ken,
But the troubles came to us both, there was no difference then ;
And all the little worries that came on us thick and fast,
She bore them for me, and I for her ; and the shadows didn't last.
Was that love ? I thought so then ; took it and was content.
Fool ! fool ! I never knew what love was and all that it meant.
Love that bears you away in wonderful endless dreams,
Till the world with its work-a-day life only a shadow seems,
Something far down below, from you that seem caught above,
And there are but two souls in the world, you and the one you love,
I never knew what that meant through those five years with my wife ;
I was happy just as a brute is, that knows not a higher life.
God ! was it better so ? Would it have better been,
If those hands had never met mine, that face had never been seen ?
Don't ask me. I only know that I'd barter years of pain
Just for a touch of those lips and an hour of that love again.
How did it come to pass ? Ah, sir, how *does* it come to pass,
Folks meet a thousand times, and one man meets one lass,
And then—in a moment—life changes ; no matter for sweet or sad,
Those two will never forget the passionate joy they've had.

One day in winter, the tide was strong, the weather wet—
Do you think I've forgotten all that ? My God, shall I ever forget ?
I'd been to and fro with the boat for hours, and was cross and worn,
Things had been crooked at home when I left my wife that morn,—
Don't think I blame her, sir, 'tis I am alone to blame,
Don't you know, can't you see I'm on fire with my love and my
sin and shame ?

When I see her ever, for ever, morning and noon and night,
Floating, floating, floating, never out of my sight,
With the ghastly smile on her lips out on the water there,
And her white, white eyelids closed, and her beautiful long brown
hair—

I'd been to and fro with the boat, a hundred times or so,
 Hadn't said much to the folks, I was moody and cross and low,
 Thinking of things at home, and wondering why that day
 Something out of my life seemed loosened, and slipping away.
 I know not. I cannot tell. I was changed. And then a face
 Seemed to rise out of the darkness and a light was over the place.
 Just a little maid, with gray eyes and golden hair,
 Stood by the water's edge and held me her hand out there.
 I took it. I looked in her face, but somehow I couldn't speak,
 I felt her tremble. She was so near, her soft breath touched my
 cheek.

She sat in the stern. There was no one else; and I shoved the
 boat away

And let her drift. Was I mad or drunk? Ah God! that winter day;
 The racing river, the flying clouds, and the wild and watery moon.
 Those first strange moments I saw her—why did they pass so soon?
 With her soft sweet eyes so full of compassion and pity divine,
 As her heart looked out thro' her eyes and read right down into
 mine.

How can I tell you all, sir? Day after day we met,
 And she's never out of my heart. How could I ever forget?
 You know what it was, sir; I loved her,—body and soul and brain,
 And I knew that life and the world could be never the same again.
 To and fro, to and fro, I toiled from day to day,
 But saw nothing, heard nothing, thought nothing, for my life was
 burning away

With the wild and passionate longing that has found its love too late,
 And my wife's sweet trustful affection only filled my soul with hate.
 Sometimes I'd wake in the night and lean over her sleeping head
 Laid on our pillow,—ours! and I'd wish that she were dead;
 Or that I were dead, or that other; or that we both were free.
 I hated her, I hated myself and all in my misery.
 And the moon stared in to mock me, and at the window pane
 The wind was moaning, moaning, "in vain, in vain, in vain."
 But the river, the rushing river (hark, sir, it wails, it wails,)
 A devil hissed in my ear, "The river will tell no tales."
 He lied, sir: you know he lied; for she won't, she won't go down,
 And you see her there—my wife, my wife. I left her to drown, to
 drown!

Take me away—away—just for a little while,
God! how her long hair clings. I cannot bear her smile!

And you're going to Ireland, sir, with the *Juno*, Cap'n White:
So was she, my little love, my golden-hair, that night,
A wild wet night like this, sir, with the clouds scudding along,
And the wind sweeping down the river, and the tide a-racing strong.
Should I never see her again? Was it better that she should go?
Wiser, may be. But better, happier? ah no! no!
My boat was crowded: my wife was there, clinging to me in fear,
When thud! thud! thud! I heard: 'twas the *Juno* drawing near,
The men were calling, the wind was loud, and my folks they took
a scare,

I only knew that my little love was aboard of the great ship there.
My God, I could not help it, I swear it! I dropt my oar,
And nearer, nearer, nearer came the ship with her rush and roar.
Crash! She was down on us then! 'tis all a bloody dream
Of drowning faces, and outstretched arms, and one long piercing
scream,

And the dash of the surging river, and a devil's voice: "Let be!
Leave her to drown! leave her to drown! who'll know it? and
you'll be free!"

And she clung to me, God! And that voice hissed on: "Leave
her to drown!"

But there she floats on the water, and she won't, she won't go down!

And its thirty years since then, sir: but she's never out of my sight,
Floating, floating, floating, morning and noon and night;
And the bells! the bells! the bells! don't you hear them over there?
The wedding bells of my little love, of my lost sweet golden-hair.
Thirty years ago! but the sound's never out of my head.
They ring, ring on,—her wedding bells! tho' she's dead now, long,
long dead!

Take me away, away, just for a little while,
Out of the sight of that clinging hair, away from that ghastly smile,
Out of the sound of those ceaseless bells, bells that were not for me,
Anywhere, anywhere, devil or God! out of this misery!



Love in a Mist.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "RARE PALE MARGARET," &c.

CHAPTER I.

"PHILLIDA FLOUTS ME."

"**S**O you won't have me?"

"Certainly not."

A pause, and two people stand looking at one another unflinchingly.

"Yet it wouldn't be such a bad thing for you, and it would be everything to me," said he reflectively.

"How can you say so? How can you *possibly* tell what it would be to you?" she cried wrathfully.

"But I have a presentiment it would be for my good, Jill—I may say Jill, I suppose?"

"Why should you suppose anything of the sort? Because you are a cousin is no reason for calling me by a ridiculous nickname."

"How full of dignity you have grown. You used not to mind nicknames."

"When one is a child it cannot be helped if one is treated as a child, but when childish things are left off ——"

"But have you left off childish things, Jill?"

She took no notice of the interruption.

"There is, there *ought* to be a difference," she finished impatiently.

"So there ought, and so there is. Seven years ago, for instance, I should not have thought of asking you to marry me."

"Nor would you now," hastily, "but for ——"

"For what, Jill?"

"You know, and I know perfectly well why you ask me to marry you."

"Do we?"

"Of course. *Anyone* could see that you do it out of *mere charity*," she cries breathlessly.

He looked really distressed.

"No," he said gravely, "I do not think that is so."

"Why should you want me for your wife? *Me*, whom you have not seen since I was ten years old, of whose character and disposition you can know nothing. Answer me that please."

He surveyed her flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes for a moment in silence.

"There are many reasons," he at length began.

"Many!" she uttered scornfully. "*Many* when there should be only one?"

"And that one?"

"It cannot be necessary to ask. That one should be that you love me. Do you love me, pray?" She asks the question boldly. Her frank young eyes look him straight in the face.

For an instant he hesitates.

"There!" she cries, "you cannot say you do. Is not that enough? Do not distress yourself to invent apologies. I never expected it I assure you. I am not so unreasonable. I have not so high an opinion of myself as to suppose that in twenty-four hours I could have inspired a *grande passion*."

"After all," thought Petres, "she is very like the old Jill whom I used to tease and make much of, and who used to like me. What a pity children's likings don't last! And yet she is nothing more than a child now."

There was no denying that Miss Mainwaring looked very young in her wrath. A little splash of red had come into her cheeks, her eyes flashed through something very like tears, her mouth trembled at the corners, and her small body was pulled up to its full height, whilst she delivered her thrusts with a heartiness and goodwill that left no doubt of her sincerity.

Petres stood looking at her in silence for some minutes.

Presently he spoke again. "You are too hasty, far too hasty, Jill. You will not hear me out," he said in a reasonable voice.

Jill threw up her hands pettishly.

"Good heavens!" cried this impatient young person. "It is *you* who are too hasty, not me. Ah! what folly all this is."

Mr. Petres began to be offended.

"If you are determined not to listen to me," he said huffily.

"I am quite determined. How could you have expected I would listen to anything so preposterous. I daresay you mean to be kind, and I shall perhaps feel grateful by-and-bye, but it is plain you don't know much about girls. Pray go away now. There is really nothing further to be said."

A pause, during which he keeps his position.

"I *cannot conceive* why you will persist in standing there," Jill cries, irritated by his persistence, "when I have begged you to go."

This was too much. Petres moved stiffly away.

"Of course, if you are serious in shutting your ears to what I had got to say, I have no resource but to go," he said frigidly.

"Serious! I never was more serious in my life," she answers, with a little hysterical tap of her foot on the floor.

"Well, I am going. I hope you don't suppose I would willingly intrude myself upon you or any woman, Jill," he said severely, "I am sorry to have offended you, I had not the remotest intention of doing so."

It was evident that he at least was deeply offended. Jill's heart smote her a little. After all he had intended to be kind. She half held out her hand towards him, but the overture was unperceived. Petres was thoroughly put out by this time, and got himself away as quickly as was compatible with that dignity which a man should perhaps never permit himself to be wholly deprived of, whatever are his circumstances.

Jill, her wrath still simmering, was left mistress of the field.

"I am sorry he is so angry," she reflected. "No, I am not. What business had he to insult me with such a ridiculous scene. One would think I was a *kitchen-maid*, whose only ambition was to get married at any price."

Enter Mrs. Mainwaring, her aunt by marriage.

"Jill, what have you done to John Petres that he has gone off so suddenly? I expected that he would stay to dinner."

"And I did *not*," said Jill oracularly.

"He said he would when I asked him at luncheon. I hope—I do hope you haven't affronted him," anxiety depicted in every feature of her fair large countenance.

"I may have. I know that he has affronted me."

"I don't believe it," cried Mrs. Mainwaring with vivacity. "John Petres is incapable of offending people. He is the best tempered, kindest, most humane ——"

"That is it," interrupted Jill. "He is *too* kind, *too* humane—his benevolence amounts to a fault."

"Be good enough to explain yourself, Jill," said her aunt severely.

"Explain myself! Impossible. I could not if I tried. I don't sufficiently understand the subject."

Mrs. Mainwaring did not encourage pertness. She frowned and arranged her glasses on the bridge of an uncompromising nose.

"Do not be flippant; I *insist* on being told what took place while I was up in my room."

Jill pouted.

"Nothing took place," she said, doggedly and mendaciously.

"Ridiculous! something must have occurred to make John Petres change his mind about dining with us. What was it?"

No answer. Jill airily hums a tune, but there is a little tremor in her voice.

Mrs. Mainwaring regards her steadily.

"I believe," she remarks with portentous deliberation, "that he *made love* to you, and that like a little fool you choose to be offended."

Jill turned round briskly.

"Made love to me," she cries. "Oh! dear, no. *Certainly* not that. What could make you imagine such a thing? Seeing that he only arrived yesterday it would surely be rather soon for anything of the sort."

"I don't know. He used to like you as a child."

"Did he?" said Jill, looking interested in spite of herself, "really and truly? Was it possible that any young man could like such an ugly, tiresome child as I was then?"

"You were a horrid little thing, desperately plain, but he didn't seem to notice your looks. And now—well, on the whole, you see you have turned out less hideous than we thought you would."

Jill laughed, and swept a magnificent curtsy. "Oh! Aunt Phoebe, you flatter me."

"You were always in scrapes," pursued Mrs. Mainwaring, "and having to be punished. I suppose he took a fancy to you out of

compassion. You were immensely grateful in those days, Jill. You ran about with him everywhere, and called yourself his little wife."

Jill reddened furiously.

"So it was compassion even then," she cried. "Aunt Phoebe, I am resolved I will not be taken pity on all my life."

Mrs. Mainwaring was attentively looking at her.

"Oh!" she said, and paused.

Jill breathed more quickly; she was red and pale by turns with shame and anger.

"I will not have his pity. It is intolerable to have been insulted with it as I was just now."

"How were you insulted, my dear Jill?" said her aunt, quite gently.

"He asked me to marry him," cried Jill stormily, "and *for a moment* he really looked as if he expected that I would say 'yes' to his monstrous proposal. Imagine, what coolness! He only came back from the Antipodes yesterday, and to-day he has the assurance to ask me to be his wife. I suppose he thinks I ought to have jumped for joy at the compliment paid me. He is mad, I think."

Proud, hot tears glistened behind her eyelashes.

"If you had said 'yes' to his offer, even if you had *jumped for joy*, as you gracefully express it, you would have shown far more sense than in quarrelling with him, and sending him away offended. What in heaven's name do you expect? For what prince in disguise are you reserving your hand?" said her aunt, sarcastically.

"I am reserving it for some one who will want to marry me because he loves me, and not out of an idiotic spasm of charitable feeling," replies Miss Mainwaring with spirit.

"Hoity toity! In my days young women did not talk so glibly of love. They left that to the men."

Jill held her tongue with an effort. She did not invariably get the best in encounters with her aunt. She walked away to the window, and stood looking out at a little old fashioned neglected garden.

Her silence provoked Mrs. Mainwaring more than speech.

"Does it occur to you to reflect what will become of you when I die?"

"I daresay I shall do somehow."

"In what manner, pray? Do not build upon your face, Jill. If you are not such a fright as we feared you would be, still you are very far removed from beauty. It is not every young man of

fortune and position who would be attracted by your lankiness, your freckles, and your terribly wide mouth."

"Thank you, Aunt Phœbe," said her niece, facing round again with rather a wry smile.

Jill admired beauty, and felt her own lack of it acutely. Why was she so lanky? At seventeen the angles of other girls were beginning to round themselves off a little, while hers seemed but to grow sharper. She looked ruefully at her own reflection in the old mirror over the chimney piece.

Item, two grey eyes; item, a fair skin, grievously freckled, and "two lips indifferent red;" item, two rows of teeth, white and even, a mouth mobile, expressive, but alack! a world too wide; a queer little short nose, the nostrils of which quiver with Jill's superabundant vitality. Behold the catalogue of her charms.

The survey was far from elating her. She shook her head deprecatingly.

"My face is my fortune, sir, she said!" she murmured in a small melancholy voice, "and certainly it is a very poor investment. Plainness and poverty together is too hard a fate. One I might have coped with, both will drive me to despair. If I were but a beauty I should win hearts by right divine; or an heiress, and I could buy them; as matters are, I am merely the unlucky object of people's compassion."

Jill's real humility as to her own personal appearance, her unfeigned belief in the reality of her ugliness, long after she had ceased to be ugly, mitigates the wrath of her aunt against her.

"We are as God makes us," Mrs. Mainwaring said sententiously. "Some have looks, and some have luck, which is better still. It can't be helped if you have neither, Jill. One would think you were created to mar your own fortune. What other girl in your shoes would go dreaming sentimental rubbish about love when so good a chance of settling herself offered. What young woman in her senses would refuse John Petres and seven thousand a year?"

CHAPTER II.

"Shall another's virtues move
Me to perish for her love?"

Petres meanwhile walked rapidly away, trying to recover from his sense of discomfiture. He had in truth thought just a little too much of his own magnanimity in throwing himself thus precipi-

tately at Jill's scornful feet, and had been punished for it. After all she was very different to the wife he had always imagined himself marrying. His ideal was calm, fair, stately, not easily moved either to laughter or tears, a composed statuesque beauty, with no petulant varying moods, not quick to anger nor sudden in repentance, in short, the very opposite to the young person who had treated him with so little ceremony.

Petres was prosperous. He had achieved a moderate competency in Australia, and returned to find himself a rich man on his arrival in England. His uncle had died suddenly, leaving a will executed many years ago, when he was comparatively poor, by which Petres was left everything, with the exception of the modest settlement which had been secured to the widow upon her marriage. There was no mention of Jill at all. Indeed, at the date of the will she was not in existence; the child of unlucky parents, who had had nothing to bequeath her but their misfortunes, her mother had succumbed to the effort of bringing her into the world, and her father had died a year later, a bankrupt, somewhere abroad.

Mr. Mainwaring had adopted the poor little waif, and had become much attached to her as she grew up. By what strange fatality he had neglected to make another will would never be known. Upon his death Jill was left penniless. Everything, with the exception of the widow's settlement before mentioned, passed to Petres, whom the testator had not seen for years, and from whom he had parted on bad terms. The uncle and nephew had quarrelled, and in his anger Petres had loftily renounced the family name, assuming that of Petres, which had been his maternal grandmother's, in lieu of it. The quarrel had originated in the older man's harshness, and incapacity to make allowances for the faults of youth. Whether Mr. Mainwaring regretted the estrangement, whether his having made no other will was to be attributed to accident or design, could not now be known; all that was at present certain was that the widow, abruptly reduced from the command of a handsome income, had to do as she best could with the interest of five thousand pounds, and that Jill had nothing but the shelter of her aunt's roof, and the run of her teeth thereunder.

Mrs. Mainwaring was fat, indolent and incredibly selfish, preferring her own ease beyond all other things human or divine.

She was disgusted at the change in her circumstances, and immediately took the only means in her power of improving her pecuniary position, namely, sinking her capital in an annuity, which raised her income to something like five hundred a year. This step took from Jill any prospect of benefiting in the future by her death. She did not consider Jill at all in the arrangement, having made up her mind that her niece must marry prudently, before she herself would be ready to exchange this world for a better, and in the meantime she could give her a home.

All this was very extraordinary and upsetting to Petres, to whom it was explained by the executors of his uncle's will, as soon as he reached England. It appeared to him unfair, and that he was in a manner taking the property on false pretences. Had his uncle entertained any suspicion that he was so near his end, he would no doubt have made a new will, leaving Petres nothing, and it seemed strange, unnatural, inhuman that because death had come suddenly and stealthily on the elder man his goods should pass to the nephew he had distrusted, and from whom he had parted in anger, to the exclusion of the wife and niece he had loved.

Petres felt embarrassed by all this newly acquired wealth. He desired in a cumbersome inexperienced way to express to his uncle's widow his vexation and regret at being the cause of her change of circumstances, and to beg her to accept some increase of income at his hands.

Of Jill he had preserved affectionate recollections of a lively child, who had made friends with him *con amore*, and had abandoned herself to frantic grief at his departure, and he easily came to the conclusion that the best way out of his difficulty, respecting her, would be marriage, and thus rescue her from undeserved poverty and dependence, and behold ! Jill, headstrong, foolish, passionate Jill, had refused to be thus rescued !

Petres was now six-and-thirty, and before he had left the colonies his mind had turned itself towards matrimony. He had constructed his ideal to bow down and worship before, but the shock of his sudden accession of fortune caused an overthrow of his day dreams, and his good heart hurried him into a premature exposition of his new intentions to his cousin.

He had been proof against the blandishments of Australian beauties, charming as their wild rose bloom and airy gracefulness of form had been. Could it have been the contemplation of his

ideal which had rendered him invulnerable, or could it have been some memory of Jill's little freckled face with its odd irregular features and dark grey eyes, which had, unknown to himself, occupied his imagination and kept out the others? When he came back and saw Jill again he was almost ready to swear the latter had been the case, so quaint and sweet did her small sparkling face look to him.

His tender recollection of the friendly child intensified suddenly from a mere abstraction to a living reality. He woke up from his vague dreams of impossible goddesses. He would marry Jill he forthwith resolved, mainly for her good, for he was not as yet in love with her, so at least he would have protested had anybody questioned him; and had indeed been almost driven by her pertinacity to protest to Jill herself, but she attracted him more strongly than as yet any other woman had been capable of doing.

He thought out the matter over his morning pipe, and concluded to speak at once, that things might immediately be put on an easier and more comfortable footing all round. He sallied down to the cottage in time for his aunt's luncheon. The importance of his project kept him silent during the repast, so silent that Jill had rallied him upon his pre-occupation.

He had come to them for luncheon not because there was any difficulty in getting himself fed in his own house, and in complete unconsciousness of the extra trouble he was inflicting on the lesser establishment of the cottage, but because loneliness was abominable to him. He had had enough of solitude; his instincts were social. The melancholy grandeur of the great wainscoted dining-room at the hall, the solemn attendance of the butler and footman palled on him already.

Mrs. Mainwaring was anxious to show her husband's nephew that she bore him no ill-will for having inadvertently supplanted her. She was astute enough to perceive that since it was so, more good was to be done by propitiating the usurper than by offending him. She did not grudge the little extra dish his appearance had rendered necessary for luncheon, but did the honours of her table with genial hospitality, and had her reward in the evident gratitude Petres exhibited for her kindness.

When the meal was over she had gone away to her own room to sleep the sleep of digestion, according to her daily custom,

leaving Jill to entertain her cousin. Full of his magnanimous purpose he invited her to come out into the park with him. The atmosphere of the cottage was stuffy and the park spread itself out cool and tempting on the other side of the road. He fancied he could speak more easily under the stately beeches, which made it a glory to the country round, but in the face of Jill's absolute unconsciousness he had not found speaking feasible, and it was not till they had returned to the little drawing-room, and she had begun to wonder at the length of their aunt's slumbers, that he at last blundered into his subject.

Once having begun he spoke well, putting his proposal in a manly, direct manner, which had deserved better treatment than Jill's first startled astonishment, and subsequent withering scorn.

As he walked home rejected, he told himself that he should not have been thus flouted. He suffered at the brusqueness of his rejection. His *amour propre* was wounded by it, nevertheless before he reached his own home he had forgiven Jill.

"She is only a child," he said, "and I startled her, but what a little wild-cat she is! Perhaps I should have done better to have waited a bit. Poor Jill! she stands on her dignity, being about the only thing she can call her own. So you're poor, Jill. Poor and plain and proud, and you've got a temper of your own, and I've insulted you. You have forgotten the old days of our friendship. What a fine scorn there was in your eyes and your tragic little voice when you demanded to know if I loved you. Love? I don't know. It seems too soon to be sure about that."

He knocked off the heads of the field daisies as he absently walked towards the hall. Jill had succeeded in impressing her individuality on the first aspirant to her hand, if she had done nothing else. He could not forget her, he could not if he would. The passionate sound of her voice rang still in his ears, and her flushed angry face seemed hovering in the air about him.

To be refused by any woman is not a pleasant experience, however politely it may be done, and to be refused rudely, violently almost, by a young person one has hardly come to regard as much beyond the short frock and flowing hair stage of existence, is an aggravation of the unpleasantness.

For several days Petres abstained from going near the cottage; Mrs. Mainwaring pettishly observed upon his absence, and even darkly alluded to Jill's ill behaviour in the presence of the maid-

servant who waited upon them. When she was alone with her niece she unbridled her tongue altogether, and freely upbraided her with her perversity and wickedness in slighting the benevolent intentions of Providence on her behalf.

Jill was goaded to a spurious calmness.

"It is no use, aunt Phoebe," she replied quietly, "very likely you are right, and I shall never have another eligible offer as long as I live, but even with that dismal fate before me I cannot bring myself to submit to being married for charity."

CHAPTER III.

Imo.—"I am much sorry, sir,
You put me to forget a lady's manners."

"How d'ye do, Miss Mainwaring?"

"How d'ye do, Mr. Petres?"

A quick cool handshake, and they move in different directions to take up positions for lawn tennis. They had met on neutral ground. Jill going to the rectory on parish matters, had been induced to stop for tennis.

The rectory family consisted of the rector, his wife, a son, and a daughter. Beatrice Hope was tall, slender, artistic, aged nineteen; Steve, four years younger, a light-hearted, graceless school boy, home for the holidays.

Petres, naturally gregarious, gravitated towards the rectory, now that a slight embarrassment disturbed his relations with the cottage. He was standing talking to Steve on the lawn when Jill and Beatrice came out with their racquets. Steve, whom nothing escaped, instantly remarked the ceremonious greeting of the cousins.

"I say, do you two 'Miss Mainwaring' and 'Mr. Petres' each other?" he asked open mouthed.

"We do," returned Jill promptly. "Might I ask if you have any objection?"

"First cousins generally don't."

"Let us be the exception then. There is nothing so stupid as doing just exactly like everybody else."

"How are we going to play?" interrupted Beatrice, perceiving a slight difficulty somewhere, and benevolently giving the conversation a turn. She spoke in a plaintive, low-pitched voice, diametrically different to Jill's, with its sudden abrupt transitions.

"We two will play you and Petres," said her brother.

"Oh, but really," she remonstrated *sotto voce*, "it won't be fair Steve. You know Mr. Petres can't play a bit."

"I mean to have Jill, that's all. Jill's a stunning player."

Beatrice imperceptibly lifted her graceful shoulders and resigned herself.

"Well, then, Mr. Petres, let you and me go to the further court. At least we will not have the sun in our eyes."

Lawn tennis had not been developed in that part of Australia from whence Petres had returned. In fact, had anyone started it, insuperable difficulties would have arisen to getting up a set. Games of the sort may be said to be at a discount on the confines of civilisation, where men work too hard to care for that kind of play. Petres wanted to play well, and did his best to improve under the guidance of the graceful Beatrice, but he blundered in his very eagerness to excel. Miss Hope, for all her langour and affected æstheticism, could play lawn tennis. She served well, and her unusual height and length of limb gave her an advantage at the game. She did not run much, she disliked running, it threw her lines out of harmony, and disarranged her well-studied draperies; but her eye was quick, and she was attentive, and generally succeeded in getting behind a ball in time to return it if it were possible to do so. She was imperturbably polite, and betrayed not the smallest trace of annoyance at her partner's clumsy attempts to second her, attempts which too often resulted in disaster.

The other two were active as cats, and played well together; and, as Beatrice had foreseen, they won far too easily. The victory was so hollow that Steve of his own accord proposed a change of sides.

"Come over to me, Bec," he said condescendingly, "and let Jill play with Petres."

Jill changed her place in silence. Her countenance did not express gratification at the alteration.

"Now, *mind*," she muttered unkindly to her cousin, "I can't have you getting in my way as you did in Beatrice's. Stand well back, please, and leave all the balls you possibly can to me."

The game began, and progressed with varying success, but, upon the whole, fortune favoured the brother and sister. Beatrice calm, wary, certain of herself, glided as if by instinct to the right place, while Steve, energetic and keen to win, played up in a manner

very superior to Petres. Jill, the best player of the four, was getting beaten by the incompetency of her partner.

Small, agile, and dexterous, she flashed from court to court with tireless ubiquity, taking balls which should have been taken by Petres, had his ability equalled his zeal. Her eyes were bright with anxiety, she was fighting hard for victory. Jill was a person who always played to win in all the affairs of life. Her visible contempt for his shortcomings stung Petres. What! because a man cannot all at once excel in a game he has had no opportunity of acquiring, is he therefore a fit target for those lightning flashes of withering disdain which shoot from beneath Jill's knitted brows, if a ball eludes him, which she has been compelled to leave to his tender mercies?

They are playing the last game of the set, the conqueror. Long it hung in the balance. Jill's nostrils quiver, her nerves are strung to their highest pitch. She is determined to win, and such determination is nine-tenths of the battle, and, alas! but for Petres she would have won.

Beatrice is serving. One of her wily balls comes gently towards Petres. Jill looking on with parted lips cries out breathlessly,

"Wait for it, *pray* wait for it!"

Too late. Before the sound of her words could reach him, he had run in to meet it. The ball pitched too near him, and breaking obliquely to the left, shot past, falling just within the back line.

"Game," cried Steve, executing a war dance.

"Game," echoed Beatrice, smiling gently.

Petres coloured and bit his lip, and Jill—Jill with one look of keenest reproach, of superb disdain, let fall her racquet and marched silently away. It was evident she could not trust herself to speak.

"What a jolly game," said Steve, struggling with a laugh provoked by the dignified retreat of Miss Mainwaring.

"I dare say it seems so to you," remarked Petres dryly, a look of vexation on his face.

"Do not mind about Jill," said Beatrice kindly, "she will get over her disappointment directly. She is always so tremendously in earnest, she does everything with all her might, but she never bears malice."

"I am glad to hear it, nevertheless, I don't think I shall try her patience by playing tennis again. My incapacity is evidently an unbearable infliction."

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Beatrice looked earnestly at him, something in his tone aroused her wonder.

"Indeed," she said calmly, "you should not mind Jill's tantrums, no one who knows her does. Why should you leave off playing tennis? In a short time you would manage it well enough."

This game of tennis was destined to widen the breach between the cousins. Petres regarded Jill's behaviour as childish, undignified, unkind if not rude, and resolved that the first advances towards a renewal of friendship should not come from him, and Jill for her part thought her cousin stiff, stilted, prone to take offence and hug a grievance. She was heartily sorry he had ever come back from the colonies at all, where, judging from his present lugubrious countenance, the rough life had suited him better than the comforts of an English home.

"He is a kill-joy," she said angrily. "He will not enjoy himself, and he hates other people to do so either."

She fretted at his perpetual observation. His grave eyes seemed to be constantly watching her, to her inexpressible irritation. What business was it of his how she conducted herself. If she were flighty and foolish, as he had the air of thinking her, ought he not to be overwhelmed with thankfulness that she had declined to accept him as her lord and judge? Of course he was thankful, anyone could see that. He looked as though he was for ever hugging himself with the thought of his escape. He evidently had not cared enough for her to be long mortified by her refusal of his hand. Jill grew a little paler, and her temper became a trifle shorter. In dire disgrace with her aunt, the poor little girl was made miserably self-conscious by her sense of Petres' silent scrutiny, which appeared to be weighing her in the balance and finding her wanting. The days went by one after another, and Jill's hot spirit rebelled equally against Petres' cool disapprobation and the malicious nods of Mrs. Mainwaring's aged head, as she commented agreeably upon her nephew's manner.

"Jill, my dear," she would say, smiling till the full glories of her new *rétable* were displayed to view, "you have let John Petres slip through your fingers. You have been a little fool. He has seen far too much of you now ever to ask you again. I hope you won't live to regret your folly. Do me the justice to admit that I did not encourage you in it."

Jill was being driven to desperation, but Petres was far from perceiving how much he personally irritated her. He was studying her at his leisure, trying to trace in the self-willed, unkind, reckless Jill of to-day the frank and faithful little sweetheart of long ago—trying and failing.

CHAPTER IV.

“The simmer is gane
When the leaves were green
And the days are awa
That we hae seen.”

“Jill has set up a dangler,” remarked Steve to his sister, some weeks later. “I shall talk to her about it.”

“You had much better not meddle with things that don’t concern you.”

“But this particular thing does. Jill and I have always been friends, and friendship has its obligations,” said Steve magnificently. “She shan’t be made a fool of for want of a hint to look out for herself.”

“Dear me! What will you take next upon yourself? I do not imagine she is in any danger of being made a fool of.”

“That shows how mighty little you know about it. This fellow, Lascelles, is the typical hussar, he loves and he rides away. Brute!”

“Indeed; how do you know?”

“Oh, I could tell you lots about him if I chose. His brother is in my house at Eton. There’s no end to the young women he has deluded. I mean to tell Jill to take care of herself.”

“Much she will thank you.”

“Owing to Mrs. Mainwaring not going about with her, she’s got no one to tell her things.”

“I can’t see that it is your place to lecture her. Why should you suppose she is falling in love with Captain Lascelles, pray?”

“She flirted with him outrageously at the Lindsays. Instead of playing tennis she mooned about the woods with him, and actually attempted to dance on that wooden platform in her tennis shoes. Fancy Jill being idiot enough for that! It is high time some one interfered.”

“Take care. It is dangerous offering unwelcome advice.”

“I am not afraid.”

"Don't complain if you get the worst of it. Remember, Jill always had the use of her tongue."

Steve smiled wryly.

"I am not likely to forget it, considering how often she has exercised it on me. All the same, I mean to speak to her, whether she likes it or not. I am not sure it isn't Petres' business by rights, but though he is savage enough with her he won't speak himself."

"Oh!" said Beatrice, curiously, "so Mr. Petres is savage, is he?"

"As savage as a bear, it's my belief." Confidentially, "Petres is in love with her himself."

"Oh dear, oh dear, what happiness for Jill!"

"He isn't half such a bad fellow when you come to know him. I think it won't be to Jill's credit if she likes that beast, Lascelles, the best."

"What has Captain Lascelles done that you dislike him so much?"

"Lots. He's making Jill as conceited as himself. She actually pretends now she doesn't care for tennis. Too hard work, she says, makes her hot. Such bosh!"

"Might not that be because Mr. Petres doesn't play?" remarked Beatrice slowly.

"I tell you she hates Petres."

Beatrice did not answer. Perhaps she had caught a certain wistfulness in Jill's eyes as they sometimes strayed involuntarily towards her cousin, even when she was flirting her hardest with the hussar.

Petres was still keeping aloof. He watched her proceedings with growing discontent and uneasiness. Could it be that he was falling in love with this wayward, shrewish little creature, differing so entirely from the beauteous tranquil ideal of his soul? He began to suspect it. What a descent from those calm heights of philanthropic superiority from whence he had reached down his hand to Jill, indigent and disinherited, summarily inviting her to share his prosperity. He was conscious of a violent and disproportionate aversion to her military admirer. An increasing anxiety grew upon him lest in her inexperience, her youthful confidence, she should be unsuspectingly letting her heart go out of her own keeping into that of this rather swaggering hero.

What an enormous time the fellow's leave lasted. It was more

than six weeks since he came down to visit his family, who must surely have had enough of him by this time.

It happened to have been a particularly fine summer, and the neighbourhood had been alive with garden parties, and at each and everyone of these entertainments Captain Lascelles had established himself at Jill's side.

"Confound him," murmured Petres, "he is always in her pocket."

"Look at that fellow Lascelles prowling round Jill," grumbled Steve; "there's no speaking to her for him."

Did she take delight in his rather pronounced attentions? It was hard to say. She smiled and chattered, and glanced up at him from under her curling lashes with charming demure coquetry, half arch, half shy; in short she "carried on" in a manner shocking to behold, and yet, every now and again, her eyes wandered to where Petres gloomed apart.

The middle of September, and some restless spirits had got up a pic-nic to see the ruins of an ancient monastery perched on a hill some miles off. Petres grumbled at the whole thing, but eventually made up his mind to go, because—well, perhaps, because Jill was going.

"Thank Heaven these tomfooleries cannot last long now," he reflected; "the summer is over, and the equinox will soon break up the weather."

The day of the pic-nic proved remarkably fine, warm, yet by no means too hot. The commissariat arrangements were perfect, and everyone said to his neighbour that nothing could be going off better. In the midst of the general content were one or two less satisfied spirits, amongst them Jill, left temporarily by herself. She was washing lettuce for a salad when Steve Hope came up to her.

"Oh, I say, Jill," he began, "I want to give you a word of advice about *him*," indicating by a slight backward nod the approaching Lascelles. "He is a cad, a regular unmitigated boasting brute."

This was plain speaking at any rate.

Jill flew into a passion. She gave a little vicious stamp, her eyes flashed fire enough to have consumed on the spot anything less hardened than an Eton schoolboy.

"Steve," she panted, "how *dare* you? Who gave you leave to

lecture me? Who set you on to talk against a person who has never done you any injury? Ah, I know, I can guess," her glance lighting contemptuously on the distant Petres.

Steve followed the direction of her eyes.

"What a spit-fire you are, Jill. *As it happens* you are all wrong. So far from anyone having set me on to speak to you they told me *not* to. Beatrice even said I should only make mischief. I don't care if I do, but you shall hear the sort of fellow Lascelles is, if you never speak to me again."

"I never will, never, never, *never*," she cried vehemently. "I refuse to listen to another syllable against Captain Lascelles from you or anybody."

She threw away her lettuce and set off to meet that aspersed person, who was coming towards them.

"Let us go and sit in the shade somewhere," she said recklessly to him, "I do not see why I need trouble about the luncheon. There are plenty of people who enjoy fussing over salads and things."

They went and sat down under a large tree, and proceeded to look on at the others bustling about. Possessed with the idea that she was being watched by Petres, Jill beamed more and more demonstratively upon the hussar. She was so abnormally gracious that Lascelles himself became mildly astonished at the encouragement given him, high as was the value he was accustomed to set upon his own merits.

"Poor little thing," he complacently reflected, "she's getting really fond of me. Pity she hasn't a rap to bless herself with. What a sweet peppery little soul it is. Shouldn't wonder if I have a deuce of a scene with her when I have to say good-bye and go back to Aldershot."

The next moment he was asking Jill for a bit of her curly brown hair. She seemed doubtful for a second. Was Petres looking at them still? She thought so. There he was in the self-same place, his face half turned their way.

She hesitated no longer.

"Well, then," she said with a small coquettish smile, "it must be the least little bit in the world. Let me have your knife."

She severed a little dark soft ring from her naughty head and gave it to him smilingly. He put it to his lips like a stage lover, and then with an air of rather exaggerated sentiment carefully put it away in his note case.

The little comedy played for his benefit was not lost upon Petres, and Jill plainly deciphering the look of disgust and vexation on his distant face, knew that she had succeeded in her plan to annoy him. She grew all at once soberer, and proposed returning to the rest.

Petres was silent during luncheon, silent and beyond reason grave. But for the neutralising effects of Jill's reckless gaiety his gloom might have damped the hilarity of the party.

Steve Hope regarded her severely. Why all this levity on her part, had she taken leave of her senses? Could she not see that her inordinate sprightliness was making people stare at her?

Luncheon over, a good-natured matron took the girl aside and said a kind word or two as to the expedience of not letting her spirits get altogether the better of her.

"I am speaking to you, dear, as I would to one of my own children," said the kind woman, "you won't be hurt or offended, Jill, if I say one thing more?"

Jill signified she would not.

"Well then, do not let Captain Lascelles engross you all the afternoon, dear. He is not quite the sort of person for a girl to make herself in any way conspicuous with."

The voice was so gentle, the face so motherly, that with one of her sudden impulses Jill threw her arms round her friend's neck and kissed her fervently.

"You nice kind dear old thing," she said affectionately and irreverently, "I will try and behave to please you. You don't rub one up the wrong way, even saying the horriest things for one's good."

On separating from Mrs. Crofton she found herself in close proximity to Petres.

"Will you come and look at the ruins with me, Jill?" he asked in a rather constrained voice.

"Very well," she answered, with momentary gentleness.

They walked a little way in silence. All at once he began to speak rapidly, and with some agitation.

"Jill," he said, "will you tell me if you and Lascelles are engaged to be married?"

She hardened instantly. So now he was going to worry her.

"I don't think you have any right to ask me," she said, slowly and defiantly.

"Have I not? Think, Jill, you have no father or brother to stand by you. Surely our relationship warrants my asking that much."

She flashed a quick look at him, half unclosed her lips to speak, thought better of it, and controlled herself with a visible effort.

"Perhaps so," she said coldly, "you are much older than I am, and have seen more of the world. You are, of course, the best judge of what is fitting."

He winced. It was true, he was older, ever so much older; he had hardly sufficiently realised this fact before. Just now, however, the disparity of their ages seemed to strengthen his hands.

"You will not refuse to answer me, Jill," he said, between entreaty and command. "Are you or are you not engaged to Lascelles?"

"I am not," she answered, looking straight before her.

He drew a deep breath, and muttered

"Thank heaven, so far."

Aloud he added with a little heat, "Then why were you so foolish as to give him some of your hair just now?"

"Why should I not? It is not a crime to give a friend a bit of one's hair if he wants it, and Captain Lascelles is my friend."

She looked boldly at him as she said this.

Petres lost his patience.

"And how many other women's friend, too?" he asked sarcastically. "I suppose he will now show your hair at mess along with your photograph, as he did Eleanor Beauchamp's, and swear it was given him by a poor little girl who, worse luck for her, fell head over ears in love with his highness. That is about his form."

He spoke with indescribable bitterness.

Jill's eyes blazed up all at once. She grew red all over.

"Who is Eleanor Beauchamp?" she cried unguardedly, "and what has she to do with me?"

"She was just such another little fool as yourself, Jill. She wasted her love on Lascelles, and fancied, poor thing, he really wanted to marry her. It broke her heart when he backed out of it and went away. She's moped herself into a decline, they say. Take care you don't deceive yourself in the same fashion. He is merely amusing himself with you, Jill. He will throw you over like the rest."

"I don't believe a word of all this," cried Jill, passionately.



"A great block still cobering bad fallen upon him."—PAGE 106.

"You cannot bear to see me amused and happy, and you must needs try and spoil all my pleasure. It is mean and *little* of you to bear malice, *you know why*. Captain Lascelles does not go talking against people as you do. He would scorn such a thing."

Her words tumble out neck and crop in an impetuous torrent. Her face pales and glows, and pales again, her nostrils quiver with excitement.

Petres looks at her.

"Oh, Jill!" he says sadly, "how fond you must be of that padded ass. You are almost crying because I have told you the truth about him. How has he contrived to steal your heart, child?"

"I do not believe that you have told me the truth about him. I like him because he is kind and—and *polite*. He does not scold and hector me, he tries to please me. I should be a monster if I didn't like him. There isn't anything I could ask him he would refuse me. If I wanted that bit of trumpery stone-crop up there he would get it for me in a moment."

A pause. Jill, breathless with her own eloquence, is forced to stop.

"Jill," said Petres, slowly, a strange expression coming into his face, "If I were to get you that flower should you believe I cared to please you?"

"I might."

He took his coat off deliberately and laid it down. Jill became alarmed, perplexed.

"What are you about?" she cried, uneasily. "Of course I never meant that I *wanted* that wretched weed."

"Nevertheless, I am going for it. You seemed to think Lascelles would have got it for you immediately. What Lascelles can do for you I suppose I can, seeing that I care a good deal more for you than he does."

Was it pride, or shyness, or surprise merely that held her silent? She suffered him to go from her side without a word.

The crumbling old wall formed a natural rampart at one end, and up this Petres climbed. It had been a main wall, and wide. Once on the top there was plenty of room to walk. The yellow stone-crop was growing at the further end. He reached the place where it was, and stooped down to gather some.

It all happened in a moment. The mouldering masonry gave

way under him; the summit of the wall toppled over. A little puff of dust from the up-rooted stone-crop, a quick, stifled cry from Jill, a crash of falling stones, rolling down the slope the other side, and then a great stillness.

In place of the level top of the wall, a jagged uneven outline against the hard blue sky. In place of Petres' well-knit active figure—space.

Jill stood for an instant stock still, paralyzed with the suddenness of the shock; then with a horrible fear blanching her face she shuddered, and going round the end of the wall, ran down the hill, stumbling blindly over the scattered stones as she went.

Petres lay at the bottom. A great block still cohering had fallen upon him; only his head and shoulders were free. His face was deadly pale, the muscles round his mouth twitched a little.

"John," muttered Jill, in a dull far away sort of voice, "Oh! John, what have I done?"

At the sound of her words he unclosed his eyes.

"It wasn't your fault," he said slowly and painfully. "I was a fool to try and get the stuff; you didn't want it, Jill. Well, I have paid for my folly; I am done for now, dear."

She stooped over him and pushed the hair from his brow, already damp and chill.

"Do you mean you are going to *die*, John?" she said in the same toneless voice.

He looked up into her eyes and saw there an anguish unspeakable of grief, remorse, and something more, which reached him, even through the torment he was suffering.

"Tell me, Jill," he said faintly, "is it me or Lascelles whom you love?"

"Lascelles," she muttered vaguely, "I had forgotten him. It is you, John, *you*, could you not guess? I talked to him, that other one," a strong shudder shaking her whole small body, "that you mightn't find it out."

Another longer pause. He still looks at the miserable little face, white and despairing, which hangs over him in speechless woe. A gleam of joy steals into his darkening eyes, as he reads Jill's heart at last.

"Kiss me, Jill."

She stoops her stiff-necked head lower still, and lays her fresh red lips to his.

"Oh, my love, my love," she murmurs piteously, "I have killed you, and yet you love me still."

The spectre of a smile flickers over Petres' face.

"So it was *me* all along, Jill. God! what fools we have been."

"Don't," she moaned despairingly: "Oh, Jack, Jack, how can I live if you die."

The old childish nickname fell naturally from her in her trouble.

"You'll think of me sometimes, dear, and remember I was happy at last, knowing that you loved me. It is all right as it is. It was nothing but a muddle my coming back and getting the property. You'll find I thought of you, Jill. I've given it again to Aunt Phœbe and you, and you'll go back to the hall just as if I'd never come and turned you out."

He stopped. A mortal agony seized him.

"Oh, my God!" he said; "do not let this last long for Thy mercy's sake."

The sweat stood upon his brow in large drops. Jill mechanically wiped it off with her handkerchief. She was quite calm, a dull despair had taken possession of her. She seemed already to feel the brand of Cain upon her.

The spasm passed. Petres' face grew grey with approaching dissolution. His fading eyes sought hers.

"Kiss me again, Jill, and let me go," he said faintly, "this torture is too great to bear."

Voices calling them from above fall unheeded on their ears. They are beyond their fellow-mortals' reach, circled round by the shadow and the presence of death. By and bye some of the party come running down the hill, shocked, horrified beyond measure at the accident.

Jill was sitting supporting Petres' head on her breast, her own bent down over it tenderly. She paid no attention to their cries and exclamations. She seemed in a trance of grief and bewilderment, or was it awe? She looked lifted above them in some ineffable exaltation of spirit.

"Take her to Mrs. Crofton," suggested the most practical of the horror-struck group. "She will have to be got away from here."

Jill offered no resistance. She went with them like a dreaming woman. As she approached her friend, she collected herself, and standing erect, with wide clear eyes, she waved aside the motherly arms stretched out to receive her in their shelter.

"It was my fault," she said in the same level expressionless voice; "I provoked him to climb the wall to get some stone-crop. It gave way under him," she shivered and looked piteously round. "You saw the rest. He only lived long enough to forgive me, and to know the truth at last."

"What truth, dear Jill?" asked Mrs. Crofton gently.

"How dearly, *dearly*, I loved him. I am glad he knew before the end came."

"Poor child, poor Jill; come to me, my love."

Jill recoiled.

"Do not touch me," she cried wildly, "I am a horror, a thing accursed. I tell you I *killed* him."

She tottered, her limbs were no longer capable of supporting her. A charitable darkness enveloped her, and she fell forward helplessly into Mrs. Crofton's kind arms.

"Poor, poor, child," murmured the benevolent woman, her eyes overflowing with tears.

"What a horribly painful scene," whispered Captain Lascelles; "has anyone sent for a doctor?"

* * * * *

They buried Petres in the family vault beside the uncle to whose property he had succeeded for so brief a space. Jill was discovered to be an heiress, her cousin had entailed the estate upon her.

Three months after Petres' death, Captain Lascelles came again into the neighbourhood, and tendered himself in form for Jill's acceptance. He was refused.

Subsequently he married Miss Beauchamp, who was understood to have recovered from her decline. She developed an extremely robust temper, and it is to be hoped revenged herself after marriage for the sentimental sufferings she had undergone on her husband's account previously.

And Jill?

Jill lives still, faithful to a memory.



A Dream of Modern Poetry.

BY AGRIKLER.

I HAD a drame the tother night—a rummy zort o' game,
As drames ull generally be—'tyent often as I drame,
And when I do, why as do come jest zo it do goo out,
'Tis seldom wuth rememberin or taakin much about,
But this un com'd to mind agian in recollection cool,
Which proav'd that as a drame 'tw'er an exception to the rule.
And zo I thought I'd write un down, a very simple plan,
And p'raps you'll tell the manein on't—that is, zur, if you can.

I dramed as I wer dead, you zee, as aal must die zome daay,
I dramed as I wer buried, in the ordinary waay.
I dramed (and vor Agrikler they couldn't well do less)
As they had got a paragraph about me in the press.
I dramed as how I'd liv'd beyond the ordinary span,
I dramed they zed I werdn't not an ordinary man.
One went so vur as zaay, and 'tw'er enough to make me vaain,
As how as 'twould be long afor thay'd zee my likes agaain.
Another qualified that there (as didn't zeem so good),
To zee the likes of I again they hoap'd they never should.
Zome zed as I wer vulgar, zome zed I wer a wit,
But I wer dead, and no one zeem'd the wuss vor that a bit.

But 'tw'erdn't long as zeem'd to I—I zeem'd to zee it plaain—
I thought I wer a youngster, as wer zomehow born agaain,
Wi aal the thoughts and veelins (or at least I fancied zo)
As I can well remember havin fifty year ago.
But zomehow thengs wer different—aal turn and turn about—
And topsy turvy fashion, as I coodn't well make out.

Ther werdn't any farmers—thay wer aal gone off the hooks—
 Extincted like the dodo as we rades about in books.
 Ther werdn't any person as wer brought up to a trade,
 But ev'ry theng you wanted you could get it ready made.
 And aal the necessary thengs were fashioned on the vloors
 Of very beg co-operative factories and stores.
 And instid of human labour, why ev'ry theng did zeem
 To be done by power combin'd of electricity and steam.

I werdn't much zurpris'd, and reather lik'd it vor my part,
 Vor I wer always very fond of poetry and art.
 And now, thenks I, is jest the time to carry zuch thengs droo,
 Becaas I be a gennelmun, wi nothin else to do,
 That is I fancied as I were—'tis very much the same—
 But then you must remember as 'twere nothin but a drame.
 I thought I wer a gennelmun, and fancied I wer clever,
 And as vor writin poetry a better vist than ever.
 Zo I writ a girt long epic—'twere nearly half a ream—
 And tuk un to the place where thay did work em off by steam.
 And (in coorse I were but dramein) I thought of aal the rest,
 As thay were turnin out vrom there, mine wer the very best.
 Zo truthfull and zo sensible, or zuch wer my endeavour,
 But as vor aal the rest thay hadn't got no sense whatever.

The Editor he gied it back wi zummut like a sneer,
 Zed he, "Dear sir, we do not want no brain-made copy here.
 Your verse I own has great originality and force,
 But then you see 'tis rather broad, and just a little coarse;
 And then you have another fault the public wont endure,
 Your meaning is too plain and not sufficiently obscure.
 For common sense the present age has really no demand,
 The public will not buy a book which they can understand.
 For whether 'tis an epic, or an essay, or a sonnet,
 Each reader likes, of course, to put his own construction on it.
 They will not thank an author now for saving them the trouble,
 And *if* there be a meaning, why it should at least be double."

"Excuse me, zur," zed I, "but will you jest zaay that agian."
 (I had a strong suspicion as I must be dramein then)
 "A book athout a manein is a theng I own I hae none,
 And always thought that there wer what you caals a *sine quâ non*."

"By no means," zed the Editor, "one time it might be so,
But that antiquated notion was exploded long ago.
There's not the least occasion for it in the present day,
As I'll readily convince you, if you'll kindly step this way."
Zo he took me to his workshop (that werdn't jest the name
As he caald it by, but then you zee 'twere only in a drame).
And there wer a machine stuck in one corner of the room,
A zert o' mongrel cross between a organ and a loom.

Zes he, "There stands our poet." Zes I, "He zeems a rum one."
Zes he, "He's very musical, although I own a dumb one,
And weaves a lot of poetry by automatic action,
And turns out sixty lines an hour, and gives great satisfaction."
Zes I (by what he towld me I wer flabbergasted quite),
"And do you mane to zaay a theng like that can thenk and write!"
Zes he, "Why, no; but he'll compose and turn it out like winking,
In writing verse 'tis only waste of time to practise thinking."
Zed I, "Zome verses made like that I'd raally like to zee um,
And if, zur, I mid make so bowld, what kind o' verses be um?"
Zes he, "First rate, as you must own, each line will rhyme and scan
As well as you or I could write, or any other man."
Zed I, "And what's it aal about when one the product zees?"
Zes he, "Just name a subject, be it anything you please."
Zed I, "Then let the theme be love, a hackney'd one 'tis true,
And mebbly, zur, as thic machine ull breng out zummut new."
Zed he, "Just wait a minute while I wind the poet up,
The index set at 'love,' and draw the sentimental stop."

I've zed as thic machine zet in thic corner of the room,
Were a zort of mongrel cross betwixt a organ and a loom.
The works, of coorse, wer out o' zight, my friend he open'd wide
The foldin door aboave, and gied a glimpse of the inzide.
But aal that I could zee there wer a lot o' wooden reels,
And a thousand yards or zo of tape, a runnin round on wheels,
Aal printed on wi letters. The letters zeemed to I
To be in that condition as a printer caals in "pie."
Zes he, "This here's a patent, I can give no explanation,
But the letters as you see be in a state of cogitation.
Now just observe," zed he, "how quick the letters come and go."
He directed my attention to an open space below,

Where the lines begun a formin, e'en amoast as vast as speech,
 And, as he show'd me aaterwards, ten syllables in each.
 Zed he, "Now write as fast as you can use the pen and ink,
 Because with this machinery you mustn't stop to think."
 Zo I dipp'd my pen thic moment (I didn't wait vor thought,
 But scribbled on like mad you zee), and this is what I wroate :—

"Love is the blossom of unfinish'd years,
 The blooming incense of unhallow'd thought.
 Deep in the bosom of insensate tears,
 By wily cheerfulness oft comes unsought.
 Nor florid prose in honied accents wrought,
 Nor stripling decadence the charms supply.
 But gushing o'er like bubbles come to nought,
 The frank disclosure, the envenom'd sigh,
 And all the blank machinery that proves the reason why.

"I would not for a wilderness of pain
 Become the embryo of potent fears,
 I would not see that gushing star again,
 Which rouses emulous of martial peers.
 I would not be o'erwhelmed with galling tears.
 Or fright in extasy the dreamy spell,
 That pales romantic in a cloud of sneers.
 I would not be that adamantine well,
 Which rushes bibulous to meet the ocean's arid swell."

"Jest stop a minute, zur," zed I, "there must be zummut wrong."
 (I know'd the stanza were complete, the line were extra long.)
 "The verses run aal smooth and straaight, but then thay got no
 sense!"

Zed he, "I told you that was not the slightest consequence.
 Great poets leave a nut to crack when they are dead and gone,
 But, of course, you've lost the context, for the theme is running on.
 But never mind, just wait a bit, and take up the refrain,
 When a swinging Alexandrine fills the open space again.
 An unexhausted repertoire in combination clever,
 By an endless transposition will discourse on love for ever.
 But lest you should be wearied with your great exertions clerical,
 We'll now exchange the stanza from Spenserian to Lyrical."

"Fitfully, gushingly, fumingly sweet,
Where is my Flora; O, where is my Flo?
Down by the river bed's mossy retreat,
Thither we wander and thither we go.
All analytical,
Nervously critical,
Raving of charms anæsthetic political,
Do we not truly know
('Tis in hot July now).
Do not my fairest be treating me cru'ly now,
Rolling meanders of heavenly pain
Flow on my bosom again and again.
'Tis there thy beauty lies,
'Tis there my duty lies,
Grand, hyperbolical, exquisite Jane!"

"God bless my sowl!" zed I; "jest now I thought a zed 'twer Flo
When I begun thic stanza, not a quarter 'nour ago."

"'Tis," zed the Editor, "a fault that's owing to the weather,
The poet has a trick at times of mixing things together.
But what, sir, would you have from one with neither heart nor brain,
'Tis not to be expected that his meaning should be plain."
"Why, no," zed I, "that's very true—I doan't pertend to doubt it—
But love wi neither heart nor brain, what *can* he know about it."
Zed he, "Sir, 'tis the fashion ever since I went to college
To judge an author by his style, and never by his knowledge.
The *words* are most important, for when all is said and done,
The subject is the framework to display the words upon.
To understand the framework now is not one bit of use,
And those who write in ignorance are always most diffuse.
'Tis just the same with parsons, who write sermons by the mile,
Do we judge them by their meaning?—not a bit, but by their *style*.
And those who are considered most eloquent and grand,
Are such as few can follow, and none can understand.
And the public always give the palm to those who longest spin it,
And not to those who being brief put pith and meaning in it."

Zed I, "That maay be zo, but then I doan't admire the plan,
I reather thenk I will not be a literary man.
Write verses by machinery wi beauty vor a text!
I spoase thay'll be inventin a machine vor coortin next.

H

Tud save zome trouble mebbly, but vor I tud never paay,
I much perfers to do it in the good owld fashin'd waay."

Zed he, "That's quite impossible, if such be your intent,
Such things are now forbidden by an Act of Parliament.
Love, marriage, population, are no longer left to fate
But wisely regulated by the councils of the State.
'Tis only heathen nations on the outskirts of the earth
Who follow out the principles implanted at their birth;
Which, ever since in Eden the catastrophe began,
Have brought about the misery and decadence of man."

. . . What I mutter'd here I must not write it plain,
Or the Editor will tell me as 'tis reather too profane.
Thenks I, "Be I a dramein?—or is it my onhappy fate
To be come into thease wordle jest a century too late.
Well—thenk'ee, Mister Editor—I'll tiake, if you doan't mind,
Jest a drain of—proossic acid, or zummut o' the kind.
If that's the waay thay manage thengs, I'll zaay at once good bye,
A wordle such as you describe ull never do vor I."

He vill'd a sparklin bumper up, the bumper I did take,
And drenk'd (at least I thought I did), and—I wer wide awake!
Thenks I,
. . . "Who would a thought it;
. "Tis zo seldom as I get it.
"That sammon,
. . . "And that cowcumber,
. "I wish I hadn't yeat it."





Shakespeare's Ghosts.

BY JOHN TAYLOR.

THAT we find some of the most famous of ghost stories in Shakespeare's plays need hardly be said, but the remark may serve to introduce our subject. To call up spirits from the vasty deep of the underworld was a prerogative of which the magician of Stratford showed his possession by raising a long array of spectres, from the shade of imperial *Cæsar* to the shadow like an angel whose bright hair had been dabbled in blood by perjured *Clarence* at Tewkesbury. It may be asserted that in this nineteenth century every ghost has been laid, and all communication with the kingdom of spirits cut off. In the battle between modern science and old beliefs the Philistines have won the day, and not the day alone, but the night also. The long extended realms and rueful wastes of night have been invaded and carried by storm, their visionary inhabitants driven out and put to ignominious flight. Ghosts, spectres and hobgoblins, fairies, gods and demi-gods, and even the guardian angels themselves, one of whom, like Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, was at the corner of every bed, have disappeared like last year's moonshine, and live no longer in the faith of reason. In the merry days when the philosophy of mystery had been undisturbed by the dreary philosophy of history, when matter of fancy had a chance as well as matter of fact, and when a midsummer night's dream was a midsummer day's reality, all the world was enchanted ground. "It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul," exclaims the modern inquirer in his agonising search after what he calls Truth—that is, after what is true to his cold, bloodless intellect, forgetting that there is truth of feeling as well as of fact, and

that the heart lies deeper than the head. *Veritas pessima rerum est* we say, if the philosopher's truth alone be true. When Shakespeare wrote for all mankind Truth in the nude was too brazen a virgin for his liking. His welcoming eyes beheld her in the bridal ornaments of a most excellent fancy, and like the King's daughter, all glorious within and without, also in her garments of wrought gold. In his day, men were content to believe in the beauty and reality of what they saw around them, and did not cruelly tear Nature to pieces to find out the stuff she was made of. Men did not then care for the physiological explanation of the glow on a maiden cheek, or the chemical analysis of a tear, nor did they dissect the fair face of Nature for the sake of saying this is chlorophyll and that is xanthophyll. If they saw visions and dreamed dreams, their visions and dreams were also a reality. They did not exchange beauty for ashes by declaring that the noble and chaste mistress of the midnight skies was only "a collection of rigid slags and inactive craters." Beneath the philosopher's rude handling of the universe our queenly moon, the patroness of midnight revels in the forest glade and of churchyard ghosts, has been stripped of the royal gear with which she had been invested by the poet, has had all her magnificence destroyed, and, what is worse, our great goddess Diana has been declared to be no goddess and no queen. Instead of being the sister Apollo and daughter of Jupiter, and, like the king's daughter, radiant with beauty, she has been declared not only to be of doubtful lineage, but to have a countenance covered with horrible scars and features more repulsive than a midnight witch. Who of the proud philosophers has not found it in his heart to impugn her unsullied loveliness, or, looking up from the basement floor of his hard nature, could see more to admire in her pallid face beaming over the blue ocean above than could Peter Bell in the silken primrose by the river's brim? Who of the poets, from Homer, the father of the guild, to the latest scion of his noble house, has not felt his spirit caught up in a chariot of amorous flame to greet the cold beauty of our vestal handmaid in the sky? If the gods of heaven be unsphered by the mad undevout philosopher, what can the weak disembodied shades of mortals expect? We are told, forsooth, that there are no disembodied shades of mortals. That when on our bed the moonlight falls no sheeted ghost can annoy our slumbers, because there are no ghosts but such as exist in the disturbed imagination. Such

appearances are the result, we are told, of "cerebral irritation," "visual derangement," "false impression," "mental delusion," and are a vulgar absurdity. Shakespeare thought otherwise. The ghost of *Hamlet's* father was no phantom of the brain, a false creation, but an entity whose form and outline were as distinct as the embodied figure. We have no such souls in Shakespeare as existed in the human *Hades* of Homer, which were obliged to drink blood before they could speak, prophesy, or remember the living. The souls of *Penelope's* suitors, conducted by *Mercury*, chirped like bats; and those which followed *Hercules* made a noise like a flock of birds. The ghosts in Homer are afraid of swords; and the ghosts of the Grecian chiefs and *Agamemnon's* battalions appear also to have been cowards, for when they saw *Aeneas* and his arms gleaming through the shades they quaked with dire dismay: some turned their backs as when they once fled to their ships, some raised a feeble lamenting cry which died in a sort of scream in their gasping throats. But the ghosts of Shakespeare are neither bats, nor birds, nor human cowards, but are visible existences, in clear and definite outline, though spiritualised, and have thoughts and feelings and modes of expression.

The play of *Julius Caesar* is steeped in the marvellous. Though *Cæsar* was chief pontiff, he was a professed freethinker and scoffer at all religion. Yet we find not only as his career was drawing towards a close that he was moving in an atmosphere filled with prodigies, but that as early as the time of his beginning war against the majesty of Rome his belief, real or feigned, in the supernatural was of such consequence as to involve in its issues the whole course of future history and determine the fate of every nation. On the memorable night when, at the head of 5,000 infantry and 300 horse, he marched from Ravenna to Rimini, and thence towards the Rubicon, the limit of his province of Cis Alpine Gaul, to cross which river, sword in hand, since the further bank lay within the territory of the Republic, or Italy proper, was to proclaim any Roman a rebel and a traitor, he is said to have paused and considered with awe the magnitude of his enterprise, which was no less than to take up arms against the world. The night was stormy, and his horsemen lost their way. Their torches being blown out by the gusts of wind, they were unable in the darkness to discover the true course till the night was far spent. In the grey and uncertain light of dawn *Cæsar* was yet lingering on the bank of the river of

destiny when suddenly an extraordinary sight is said to have appeared both to him and his soldiers. An apparition of transcendent beauty was descried in a sitting posture playing upon a flute of reeds. As the soldiers drew near the phantom rose and suddenly caught a trumpet from one of the warriors, and, blowing a blast of martial music, plunged into the stream, passed to the bank, and disappeared in the dusky twilight. "Let us follow, then," exclaimed *Cæsar*, "whither the immortals and the malice of our enemies alike call us." So saying he crossed the river with impetuosity, and in one moment involved himself and his followers in treason, put his foot upon the neck of the invincible Republic, and founded an empire that was to last 1,500 years. Unfortunately, Shakespeare deals only with *Cæsar's* death, and we have therefore missed the earlier scene at the Rubicon, which in the poet's hands might have been worthy of the importance of the event itself. But we have no lack of the supernatural. Although *Cæsar* himself made no scruple in asserting that the immortality of the soul was a vain delusion, yet we are told in *Hamlet* that

"In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets."

Now *Hamlet* was written many years before *Julius Cæsar*, but the great Roman was ever in the poet's mind, and he never forgets that he was the first and last of the Cæsars worthy of the name. Not only the awful powers of Heaven are shaken preparatory to his departure from the earth, but Hell from beneath is moved to meet his coming, and the dead are stirred from their graves to greet the mighty spirit soon to be added to their realm.

Cicero. Good even, Casca : Brought you Cæsar home ?
Why are you breathless ? and why stare you so ?
Casca. Are you not mov'd, when all the sway of earth
Shakes like a thing unfirm ? O Cicero,
I have seen tempests, when the scolding winds
Have riv'd the knotty oaks ; and I have seen
The ambitious ocean swell, and rage, and foam,
To be exalted with the threat'ning clouds :
But never till to-night, never till now,
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.
Either there is a civil strife in heaven ;
Or else the world, too saucy with the gods,
Incenses them to send destruction.
Cicero. Why, saw you anything more wonderful ?
Casca. A common slave (you know him well by sight)
Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn
Like twenty torches join'd ; and yet his hand,
Not sensible of fire, remain'd unscorch'd.

Besides, (I have not since put up my sword,) Against the Capitol I met a lion,
Who glar'd upon me, and went surly by
Without annoying me : and there were drawn
Upon a heap a hundred ghastly women,
Transformed with their fear ; who swore they saw
Men all in fire walk up and down the streets.
And, yesterday, the bird of night did sit,
Even at noon-day, upon the market-place,
Hooting and shrieking. When these prodigies
Do so conjointly meet, let not men say
"These are their reasons : they are natural ;"
For, I believe, they are portentous things
Unto the climate that they point upon.

Cassius charges *Casca* with dulness and with wanting the sparks of life that should inspire a Roman, or else he would see that all this strange impatience of the heaven, the cross blue lightning, the opening graves and gliding ghosts were only symbolical of the self-willed power of one who was

"Prodigious grown,
And fearful, as these strange eruptions are."

But the prodigies themselves, whatever their symbolical application, were precursive to the fatal ides of March. *Calphurnia* believes in them, and would fain persuade her lord also to believe in their significance ; but though he first gave way to her womanish fears and promised to keep at home till the ides were past, he afterwards repented and went. Next to his tragical end the self-inflicted death of the noblest Roman of them all at Philippi is the crowning event of the drama. The harbinger of that event is no less a portent than the ghost of *Cæsar* himself. A German critic (*Ulrici*) asks what can justify apparitions and spirits in an historical drama. Is it not a mere claptrap for the gallery ? But Shakespeare found his justification in Plutarch, who introduces the ghost as one of the facts of history, its appearance showing plainly that the gods were offended with the murder of *Cæsar*. The vision was thus :—" *Brutus*, being ready to pass over his army from the city of Abydos to the other coast lying directly against it, slept every night (as his manner was) in his tent ; and being yet awake, thinking of his affairs (for by report he was as careful a captain and lived with as little sleep as ever man did), he thought he heard a noise at his tent door, and looking towards the light of the lamp that waxed very dim he saw a horrible vision of a man, of a wonderful greatness and dreadful look, which at the first made him marvellously afraid. But when he saw that it did him no hurt, but stood at his bedside and said nothing, at length he asked

him what he was. The image answered him: 'I am thy ill angel, *Brutus*, and thou shalt see me by the city of Philippi.' Then *Brutus* replied again and said, 'Well, I shall see thee, then!' Therewithal the spirit presently vanished from him. After that, *Brutus*, being in battle near unto the city of Philippi against *Antonius* and *Octavius Cæsar*, at the first battle he won the victory, and overthrowing all them that withstood him, he drove them into young *Cæsar's* camp, which he took. The second battle being at hand, this spirit appeared again unto him, but spoke never a word. Thereupon *Brutus*, knowing that he should die, did put himself to all hazard in battle; but yet fighting, could not be slain. So seeing his men put to flight and overthrown, he ran unto a little rock not far off, and there setting his sword's point to his breast, fell upon it and slew himself; but yet, as it is reported, with the help of his friend that dispatched him."

Of the power of spiritual bodies to dilate or diminish themselves at pleasure, as in the case of the ghost of *Cæsar*, which assumes monstrous proportions, we find a conspicuous example in Milton's *Pandemonium*, where

"Incorporeal spirits to smallest forms
Reduced their shapes immense."

To suit the architectural convenience of the stately palace which rose like an exhalation with the sound of dulcet symphonies, the gigantic demons and great seraphic lords and cherubim contract themselves to the size of fairy elves, an unnecessary diminution of their majesty had the infernal temple been made to agree with their natural size, for which there was ample scope and verge on the burning marl. But the ghost of *Cæsar*, with more regard to its proper dignity, became greater than the body which it formerly tenanted, and in which it shaped the history of mankind. It has been asked why the ghost appears to *Brutus*, whose designs, apparently, are pure and noble, rather than to *Cassius*, who also as deeply betrayed him, and was at the same time his sworn friend. According, at least, to scandal, *Marcus Brutus* was *Cæsar's* own son. It is said that *Julius* was passionately in love with *Servilia*, the mother of *Brutus*, and, according to Plutarch, she gave herself wholly up to her paramour at the time she bore *Marcus*. It is therefore not strange that he should have a deep affection for one he thought his son. At the battle of Pharsalia, though *Brutus* had joined Pompey, he was spared by the conqueror, who received him

with marks of the most tender friendship, not foreseeing that one day this wild Republican would become a chief accomplice in his murder. But we must quote the words of Shakespeare, in which the spirit is introduced. *Brutus* is reading in his tent the night before the battle in which he is defeated by the young *Octavius*. The lamp, as customary on spectral visitations, burns low, and the ghost of *Cæsar* enters.

Brutus. How ill this taper burns !—Ha ! who comes here ?
I think it is the weakness of mine eyes
That shapes this monstrous apparition.
It comes upon me :—Art thou anything ?
Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,
That mak'st my blood cold, and my hair to stare ?
Speak to me what thou art.

Ghost. Thy evil spirit, *Brutus*.

Brutus. Why com'st thou ?

Ghost. To tell thee, thou shalt see me at Philippi.

Brutus. Well : then I shall see thee again ?

Ghost. Ay, at Philippi.

(*Exit Ghost.*)

Though the ghost appears only once upon the stage, it did not forget its engagement to be present upon the field of Philippi, where it appears after the battle in which the Republicans were defeated. This we know from *Brutus's* own confession.

Volumnius. What says my lord !

Brutus. Why, this, *Volumnius* :
The ghost of *Cæsar* hath appeared to me
Two several times by night : at Sardis, once ;
And, this last night, here in Philippi fields.
I know my hour is come.

Volumnius. Not so, my lord.

Brutus. Nay, I am sure it is, *Volumnius*.
Thou seest the world, *Volumnius*, how it goes ;
Our enemies have beat us to the pit :
It is more worthy to leap in ourselves,
Than tarry till they push us.

The ghost of *Cæsar* dead, and the supremacy of the living *Cæsar*, are too much for *Marcus Brutus*, who, notwithstanding the former denunciation of self-murder as being cowardly and vile, and his resolution to arm himself with patience,

“ To stay the providence of some high powers
That govern us below,”

rushes upon his own sword and passes to his place.

The transition from the Pagan atmosphere of *Julius Cæsar* to the Christian environments of *Hamlet* is marked by an entire change in the treatment of the spiritual world. The cold, classical grandeur of the ghost of *Cæsar*, which is only bent upon revenge for deeds done to the body, is seriously different to the

behaviour of the ghost of the elder *Hamlet*, which calls for revenge upon the murderer of both body and soul, for the spectre that troubles the stillness of the midnight air of Elsinore is a lost spirit. *Brutus* is the only evidence of the actual manifestation from the grave in the earlier instance, but in the later the spectre is seen by several persons besides the son of the murdered king. The time and place are scenically appropriate to the mysterious. It is an hour past twelve, when churchyards yawn; the air is bitter cold; all is quiet, not a mouse stirring, only the measured tread of the sentinel on the ramparts of the castle breaking the absolute repose. Twice the spectre had appeared to *Marcellus* and *Bernardo*, who at the opening of the drama had not yet ventured to address it. *Horatio* disbelieves the wild tale of his comrades, but wishes to hear *Bernardo* rehearse the account of the apparition. They sit down, and as the story is being repeated that it was only last night when a particular star had advanced westward from the pole and burned in the same place of heaven in which they now beheld it, the bell just beating one, *Horatio* is harrowed with fear and wonder at the sudden sight of the phantom itself, wearing the semblance of the armour worn in lifetime. As a scholar *Horatio* can speak Latin, and Latin is the language understood by ghosts when exorcised by the priest. He accordingly hails the majesty of buried Denmark, which, however, declines to answer, and solemnly stalks away. They wrongly apprehended the motive of the spectre's appearance, but gave it credit for patriotism and unselfishness. *Fortinbras*, of Norway, had been slain by the valiant *Hamlet*, who is now a ghost, but had left a young *Fortinbras*, as the late King of Denmark had left a young *Hamlet*. All the lands of the vanquished chief had been forfeited to the conqueror, whose interest in retaining them to his country is inferred by the officers of the watch to be the reason of his revisiting the glimpses of the moon. For the din of preparation against young *Fortinbras*, who intends to recover by strong hand the lands his father had lost, had penetrated even to the unearthly abode of the ghost. At least this is the only explanation that *Horatio* and his companions can afford for the re-appearance of the warrior-king in the very panoply in which he combated ambitious Norway. The warlike presentment is surely that of a soldier who loves his country, though parted by the sharp division of life itself from her material grandeur. The impending convulsions of the kingdom are to the mind of *Horatio*

prefigured in keeping with the manner of a previous great scene in history, the miraculous omens in connection with which made even *Cæsar* superstitious. But the present ghost does not unintelligibly squeak and gibber, and indeed in its earlier visitations it utters no voice at all. Yet *Horatio* charges it to say wherefore it comes, whether to give warnings of threatened calamities to the country which haply may be averted by timely forethought, such as only a spirit who views the hidden wheels of destiny can suggest, or whether the more selfish motive of the clinging to concealed treasure, the sordid love of which, it is said, causes spirits to sometimes walk after death, causes it for the third time to manifest its unearthly presence. But these are not the objects for which the poor ghost is suffered a few hours' nightly freedom from penal fire; and those are not the men to whom he is to communicate the meaning of his awful relations once more with the world of flesh. Indeed, we are glad that it did not reveal itself to *Hamlet's* comrades, for had it done so there would have been a loss of one of the most beautiful idyllic passages in all English poetry.

Bernardo. It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

Horatio. And then it started like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine: and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

Marcellus. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

Horatio. So have I heard, and do in part believe it.
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill:
Break we our watch up; and, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet: for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

"The kettledrums and trumpets," says Lord Molesworth in his *Account of Denmark*, p. 109, written in 1692, "which are ranged in a large place before the palace, proclaim aloud the very minute when the King sits down to table." Shakespeare was aware of the custom, and connects it with the midnight wassails held by the King, the boisterous din of which reached the ears of *Hamlet*,

Horatio and *Marcellus* at the time the ghost was a fourth time expected.

Hamlet. The air bites shrewdly. It is very cold.

Horatio. It is a nipping and an eager air.

Hamlet. What hour now?

Horatio. I think it lacks of twelve.

Marcellus. No, it is struck.

Horatio. Indeed? I heard it not; then it draws near the season,
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

(*A flourish of trumpets and ordnance shot off within.*)

What does this mean, my lord?

Hamlet. The King doth wake to-night, and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassel, and the swaggering up-spring reels;
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettledrum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

"The King's drink," says the above *Account*, "is Rhenish wine, whereof a silver beakerfull stands at every one's plate." In piteous contrast to the wild revelry of *Claudius*, amid the glitter of the flowing goblets and the gay jesting of his courtly company, was the condition of the rightful King, now as keenly sensible, we may suppose, in his spiritual form to the frosty air into which he again comes from his burning abode as to the flames that environ him during the long hours of the summer and the winter day. The strict materiality of the purgatorial and yet lower fires was unquestioned by the mediæval Catholic; and whether Shakespeare was Catholic or Protestant, he expressed the popular belief which had been handed down through the ages of the Christian Church. The words breathed into the ears of the horror-stricken *Hamlet* paint the popular belief of that age of the horrors of the grisly realm, where went those who died disappointed, unanointed and unannealed, as did the ghost of buried Denmark, who was, it says,

"Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night;
And, for the day, confin'd to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,
Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood."

But the eternal blazon must not be to ears of flesh and blood. What were the foul crimes that demanded such fierce retribution we are as much left to conjecture as of the nature of the punishment that could be of direr severity than what involved the torment of sulphurous flames, only that we are told by Jeremy Taylor that temporal fire is but painted fire in respect of that penetrating and real fire in hell. It might be thought that one of the pains of the lost was an acuter sensitiveness of conscience, for

in the case of the elder *Hamlet* the foulness of the crimes of which he accuses himself seems hardly in accordance with human estimation of their possible flagrancy. Amid the temptations and allurements of his exalted place he had never been guilty of a single act of unfaithfulness to his faithless wife, whom he loved with all the ardency of a devoted and beautiful nature. He does not, however, arraign the justice of his doom, which was a necessary consequence to his being cut off in the blossom of his sins, sent to his account, with no reckoning made, with all his imperfections on his head. But he had been a good Catholic, with a full belief in the terrors of the world to come. He would have received the last sacrament and made due preparation for his departure thither in the natural course. He was not the murderer of his own soul, but he calls for the keenest vengeance upon the man who was. Even in his lost estate he cherishes his old fondness for his incestuous queen, and would not have her harmed. He leaves her to heaven and the bitterness of her own reflections, which with penitence might yet bring her the mercy of heaven.

Every reader of Sophocles must be struck with similarity of situation between *Electra* and *Hamlet*. *Clytemnestra*, the wife of *Agamemnon*, forms an unholy attachment for *Ægrothos*, the cousin of her husband. *Ægrothos* and *Clytemnestra* slay *Agamemnon*, and reign over the Argives in his stead ; but *Electra*, his daughter, saves her brother *Orestes* from destruction, who, after many years' flight from his country, returns from exile with an intent to take vengeance on his father's slayers. His sister becomes a ready accomplice in this design, for the whole sweetness of her life during his absence has been the hope of revenge. *Electra* is a counterpart to *Hamlet*, whose feeling, however, towards his erring mother is totally unlike the complete abnegation of all filial relationship in the daughter of *Clytemnestra*, who, in her passionate detestation of the authors of her father's death, sees only the foul crime itself and the way to requital. Nothing less than her mother's blood shall compensate for her father's ; while to speak daggers but to use none, to renounce himself and redeem his mother's soul, fulfil the whole feeling after justice in the son of Denmark. *Clytemnestra*, indeed, had received provocation enough from her late lord to excite, if not excuse her direct hatred. Her favourite daughter, the sister of *Electra*, had been cruelly sacrificed by *Agamemnon* at Aulis, who, moreover, had outraged their domestic relationship by

bringing another woman to live with him under the same palace roof. *Gertrude*, on the other hand, had suffered no injury from her discrowned and dishonoured husband, whose constancy and affection had gone hand in hand with the vow made to her in marriage. But Sophocles represents the conduct of *Electra*, who has hardly more regard for her dead or for her living sister than for her hated mother, to be an inimitable pattern of womanhood, though she stands by and mocks her mother's cries while being slain by *Orestes*, and urges him again and again to smite her who bore them both, until the terrible deed is done. A Christian *Electra* would be impossible.

That spectres, according to Shakespeare's theory, were not mere mental, or what is called subjective, impressions, is evident by the apparition in *Hamlet* being seen by at least three persons at once; but it is also evident that the ghost, though an entity, is able to make itself visible to one person and invisible to another at the same time. At the last visitation of the ghost of *Hamlet's* father, in the terrible interview between *Gertrude* and her son, what is but vacancy and "incorporeal air" to the Queen is a spiritualised form with powers of utterance, and replete with feeling and emotion to young *Hamlet*. In like manner the gory figure of *Banquo* is seen only by *Macbeth*, which has made psychological commentators like Dr. Bucknill argue that it was an hallucination. *Macbeth*, he argues, was, through want of sleep, or owing to the affliction of his terrible dreams, so shaken in mind as to be bordering on disease, if indeed he had not passed the limit; and in the case of the air-drawn dagger, which he himself believed to be but a dagger of the mind, a false creation, *Lady Macbeth* would persuade him that what he beheld was only the work of fancy. But the poet did not mean it thus. It must be remembered that Shakespeare's were essentially acting plays, and that the spectator, and not the reader, was in the dramatist's mind. It would have been impossible to represent to the latter the meaning of *Macbeth's* passionate emotion at the banquet scene in the palace-hall if his chair had been unfilled by any image except what was visible to the mind's eye. In this point of view, therefore, the ghastly *Banquo* was only a stage necessity, to enable the audience to realise the cause of the vehement excitement of *Macbeth*. It was also a stage necessity that the ghastly spectre with twenty trenched gashes on his head should be withheld from the vision of the

guests, as the exigencies of the plot required that they should not understand what was intelligible to the spectators of the play. To omit the ghost of *Banquo*, as has been suggested by some commentators, would therefore be entirely at variance with the meaning of Shakespeare, which was not to give a merely intellectual, but an actual perception of the presence of the murdered *Banquo*. It has been argued that though in Shakespeare's time the generality of the people could not possibly conceive of a subjective ghost, the enlightenment of modern days has dispelled the superstition of an objective one; therefore the appearance on the stage of the dead *Banquo* should henceforth be discontinued. The answer might be that to meet this demand the whole banquet scene had better be omitted, for in no way could the poet's terrible unfolding of events consequent upon the assassination of *Banquo* be exhibited if the spectre be eliminated. Not only the ghost should not for the first and second time occupy the chair of *Macbeth*; but by the same law the shadows of the eight kings, the last of whom was the blood-boltered *Banquo*, who bore a mirror in which many more were imaged, should also cease to appear before the spectators of the play. Happily, *Macbeth* was written when dramas were not read in the study, but acted on the stage. It is impossible to conceive *Macbeth* as a closet play, and unless it is so conceived the supernatural must remain in spite of a rationalising philosophy, which is the enemy to all poetry as poetry is the enemy to all rationalising philosophy.

It may be asked after all whether Shakespeare believed in ghosts? In answer to this question it need not be thought that he believed in spirits of his own raising. The eleven ghosts that appear on the eve of Bosworth, between the tents of *Richard* and *Richmond*, were of course a pure invention, and intended as an exciting part of stage machinery. But that the poet had an abstract belief in a life to come, and in the august powers of the spiritual world and the reappearance of the dead may be argued not only from the absence of any expression of disbelief in a future state, but from the constant supernatural atmosphere of his dramas, out of which come voices and visions to convince us that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in a materialistic philosophy, wherein we ensconce "ourselves in a seeming knowledge when we should submit ourselves to an unknown fear."



The Parson and the Bull.

A Legend of the Severn Valley.

BY W. H. HUDD.

[The walls of the parish church of Hyssington still show traces of cracks which have existed, so the country people say, "time out of mind." Tradition accounts for these cracks by the circumstances related in this story.]



OW, this is a strikingly curious tale
Of a wicked old Squire of Severn Vale—
A tale that shows whence the statement came
That a bull and a squire were one and the same.

On the banks of the Severn once lived Squire Brand
Who owned "a terrible sight of land,"
Beginning where now is Avonmouth dock,
And ending, I think, at Shrewsbury clock.

And never was known, in prose or rhyme,
Nor even in Christmas pantomime,
A "bold, bad man" so charged with ire
As this most terrible Severn Squire.

I couldn't write down, if I were bid,
The horrible things this monster did;
I really couldn't—because, you see,
Those horrible things are unknown to me.

Excepting that he, with heart of stone,
Considered his neighbour's goods his own;

And ladies trembled to hear his name,
And often their husbands did the same.

He swore—oh, my !—and his boots were thick ;
And nobody ever survived his kick ;
For if to thwart him any should dream
One kick—and he sank in Severn's stream.

A wicked old witch named Margery Lock,
Who lived not far from Shrewsbury clock,
This bold Squire's anger chanced to incur—
He therefore decided on kicking *her*.



He failed with a blow of his brawny fist,
He kicked a kick, but again he missed ;
And then he stamped ; and then he swore ;
And then he kicked and missed once more.

Old Margery laughed with much delight—
Old Margery sat up late that night,
And stirred her fire to keep her warm,
And then at night she worked a charm.

She placed her cauldron on the fire
And muttered something about the Squire—
I cannot describe her charm in full,
But I know that the Squire became a Bull !



I know that the man whom
all had feared
Next day completely dis-
appeared,
And a great black Bull,
with a bushy tail,
Became the terror of Severn
vale.

From Shrewsbury clock to
Bristol town,
That Bull went bellowing
up and down ;
From village to village, from
farm to farm,
There spread an undisguised
alarm.

From Bristol town to Shrews-
bury clock
The people ran like a fright-
ened flock ;
They ran from the Bull half
dead with fright
To ask for the aid of Parson
Bright.

Now, never was preacher un-
der the sun
Who preached like the Par-
son of Hyssington ;
And *you*, my reader, as I
infer,
Were happily *not* his parish-
ioner !



To hear the eloquence he let drop
You'd fancy his sermons never would stop ;
You'd fancy he cruelly used his tongue,
For he shrivelled up all both old and young.

So when the people saw at a glance
Bull against Parson stood no chance,

Surrounding their foe, they made him run
Up to the church of Hyssington.

That day, at noon, good Parson Bright
Came from the church in the broad daylight,
And preached at the Bull—who showed such sense
He wept at the Parson's eloquence.



He still preached on—and, please remark,
He preached from noon until 'twas dark—
And people saw with wondering eyes
How much the Bull had shrunk in size.

(And I, myself, to tell you the truth,
Have suffered much from the days of my youth,
From sermons which, as a general rule,
Would lead me to pity that poor old Bull.)

The Bull so shrank till, by-and-bye,
He barely measured two feet high ;
Then darkness came—they hadn't a light—
So they locked their foe in the church that night.

Next morning, when they came to search,
They found his carcass filled the church ;

So much over night he'd grown, in fact,
He filled the church till the walls were cracked !

Then all the people, in great affright,
Called on the Reverend Sopworth Bright ;
And the Parson, looking refreshed and cool,
Again came forth and preached at the Bull.

Though his preaching began with the rising sun,
At dusk that sermon was not yet done ;
So off they went in search of a light,
And still he preached through the hours of night.

And all this time, while he preached with ease,
The Bull was shrivelling by degrees,
Until he had dwindled, as for that,
Down to about the size of a rat.

(*Some* sermons I've heard—but I mention this
In a confidential parenthesis—
Have given me serious fits of "the blues"
And made me dwindle into my shoes !)

Now Farmer Blake, who'd a biggish foot,
Presented his heavy hob-nailed boot
To serve as a coffin. The Parson stopped,
And into that boot the Bull was popped.

And there in the churchyard all alone
They buried him under a ponderous stone ;
Which if removed, the people explain,
Would let the monster escape again.*

And *this* is the strikingly curious tale
Of the Bull—or the Bully—of Severn Vale.
But let no reader of mine make light
Of the sermons preached by Parson Bright.

Nay, rather, should *you* be excited to ire,
Remember the fate of the bold, bad Squire ;
And think of the terrible risk you run
Of meeting the Parson of Hyssington !

* "The people still believe that if anyone were to loosen the stone the monster would come forth bigger and fiercer than ever, and that he could never be laid again."—*Collectanea Archæologica*, vol. I., p. 50.



“Sanitation.”

A Retrospective Lecture delivered in St. James' Hall, London,
September 6th, 1931.

BY PROF. LAW, A.PHL.O.O.L.E.,

As heard through the Ante-Telephonic-Microphone by the Editor, September 6th, 1881.

IT is with the profoundest pleasure and most intense and awful bliss that I pose before this vast assemblage this evening as an exponent of that grand, eloquent, providential, health-giving science, SANITATION. When we, metaphorically speaking, glance with our flashing orbs back into the dark vista of the past fifty years, do not the different epochs of marvellous, extraordinary sanitary advances stand out to our all-imperfect vision as bright oases in a dreary desert? *Certainly they do.* (Hear, hear.)

When we, in thoughtful, pensive mood, put the question to our all-inquiring minds, why is it that we see so many centenarians roaming through our streets, with straight and upright backs, and intelligence flashing from their still lustrous optical organs, does not the answer immediately force itself upon us that this remarkable phenomenon is due to—SANITATION. *Certainly it does.* (Hear, hear.)

When we wander through those parts of this vast metropolis, where but a few years ago so many many of our medical fraternity lived in stately style, and miss from so many of those sombrely-painted doors the shining piece of brass plate, with its neat black lettering, do we not pause and ask ourselves the weighty question, Why this thusness? and does not the reason of it, summed up in one single word, re-echo through those streets—SANITATION. *Certainly it does.* (Hear, hear.)

When we look for one brief second at the inhabitants of the great majority of our venerable and charitable almshouses, what a lesson does their study force upon our much too enlightened and logical minds! What are their past histories? Did not many of them but a short time ago build up a grand yearly income in treating those complaints of which we now hear nothing? Is not their work now over? We have no further need of their multitudes. They may feel each other's pulses and concoct for their brothers in affliction nauseous mixtures, and argue till they are blue, as to the marvellous success of some newly-conceived treatment of any of the now forgotten diseases. Their occupation is gone. The places they lived in know them no more. And were we to whisper in



their ears that blessed, much-too-highly-to-be-prized-and-guarded word, SANITATION, would not the effect of it be to send such a shock through their now by-affliction-shattered-nervous-systems, that the immediate result would be much too fearful to calmly contemplate.

When we peruse our morning papers and search through their carefully compiled columns of prevarications, do we behold those much-too-awfully-fearful-accounts of typhoid fever lurking in the

milk-can, or of scarlet fever hiding its monstrous head in the meshes of a ready-made waistcoat? *Certainly not.* And why is it, my highly-intelligent hearers, why is it? Do I not hear you, with one accord, murmur out, in much-too-utterly-silent-utteration—SANITATION? *Certainly I do.* (Hear, hear.)

Do I not see all your eyes flash with that enlightened fire, as my graphically conceived verbatations, bring up before your mental visions the dark ages of the past, and allow you to look upon the intensely-much-too-hardly-to-be-described-beautiful-brilliant-healthful-and-invigorated-condition of your present positive existence? (Tumultuous applause.)

Let me call to your mind the calamitous, I may say iniquitous, habit that prevailed but a few years since in nine hundred and ninety-nine houses out of every thousand; that habit, which I can sum up in no other words than by calling it a health-depriving-strength-reducing-intellectual-capacity-stealing-and-death-in-the-bedroom-hiding-outcome-of-monstrously-conceived-untidiness.—I refer, as you must all well know, to that direful and pernicious habit of flinging the garments you have worn on your corporeal frame during the day, when retiring to your slumbers, on the first chair that places itself in juxtaposition with yourself. Think, my delighted listeners, of the picture of your bedroom in the present day! Look at those lines neatly arranged across the top of your room, on which are hung in regular order all the clothes you have just taken off, each one of which has received its due and justifiably demanded shaking; see how the zephyr breezes from the opened windows gently permeate through the dust-laden fabric, and tell me—is not this an advance? *Certainly it is.* (Cheers.)

Think, my attentive listeners, of those much-too-intensely-deplorable-epidemics of typhoid fever, that were such constant and ever-happening occurrences but a short time since; and, in tracing back the source of these to their virgin origin, what did we find? I repeat, what did we find? Why you all know, but I will reiterate, and again strike the familiar chord on your all too-sensitive-and-eager-after-knowledge-enquiring-ear, and will say, it was *MILK!*—milk that should be food for babes, for the adult, for the aged, was now turned into a death-inducing-family-grieving-poison. Was it not so, I ask? *Certainly it was.*

And now, how is it that such a population-decimating-catastrophe cannot happen. Is it not—SANITATION?

Is it not SANITATION that has now provided for every district, every village and every hamlet that milk-analyst, before whose all-searching-and-marvellously-scrutinising-eye that milk has to pass, before the house-familiar milk-man or milk-maid can vend that all-too-utterly-precious-form of economising domestic nourishment?

Does anything escape that eager glance when that observant optical organ is placed in direct contact with that tale-telling microscope? Is not the detection of the most faintly-imaginary-suspicious-poisonous-germ now made a perfect matter of positive and absolute certainty? Does not that awe-inspiring microphone



convey to the analyst's highly-organised-aural-organ the sounds of revelry or fighting going on between the countless myriads of bacteria, and tell him that there is death in the milk-pan? *Certainly it does.* (Cheers.)

Have I not just now passed through a street, in close proximity to this edifice, in which, unfortunately, there is one single individual case of that eruptive complaint known by the now almost forgotten name of scarlet fever; and have I not, with intense and precious delight, gazed with enthusiastic and furious admiration at those grand precautionary measures that were there being so systematically and stringently carried out? Did I not see the very walls of that habitation placarded with the warning words, "BEWARE OF THE SCARLET FEVER"? Did I not notice

that no one was allowed to enter or leave that individual house except the medical gentleman who looks after the health of all the human beings in this district of the metropolis? Did I not behold the very-absolutely-daily-necessaries-of-life being hoisted up to an upper storey window? And did I not, with joy and welcome, observe that marvellous engine, silently and yet so perfectly, filling the very surrounding air with diatomised-particles of the latest and most-powerful-poisonous-germ-defying-disinfectant? The perfect bliss that lighted up my innermost soul at this sight I cannot describe to you. (Cheers, during which the lecturer was visibly affected.)

And now in a few short and brief moments this eloquent discourse, to which you have listened with such overflowing animation, will be brought to its inevitable termination, and you will all be hurrying home to impart to those who were unable to be present all the retrospective truths you have this day heard. Some, mayhap, will rapidly homeward hie in a hansom, or by the electricity-onward-moving-tramcar, and with what feelings may I ask? Will they enter that handsome hansom, or that grovelling growler, or that palatial tramcar with fears and trepidation lest from the woolly texture of those covered cushions, or from the very garment of their next neighbour, they will take to themselves some strength-depriving fever-poison? *Certainly not!* Has not the recent Act of Parliament, in all its gracious wisdom, rendered it absolutely imperative that every public conveyance should carry its own decimating-germ-defying-disinfecting-apparatus?

This, then, is what SANITATION has done for me, for you, and for all who live in this highly-enlightened-and-after-scientific-advances-enquiring-period of our nation's history. Let, therefore, this grand and much-too-intensely-to-be-prized-word be ever before our mental vision, so that we may not only be from the bottomest part of our innermost hearts thankful for all that has been and is, but also have some-it-may-be dimly obscure and imperfectly perfect idea of what this health-giving-scientifically-applied-science will be enabled to do for generations yet to come.

Note by Editor.—Enthusiastic cheering was now heard, and from all parts of the crowded hall men and women were apparently endeavouring to record votes of thanks to the Lecturer for his delightful and instructive address.

Faces.

BY C. H. WARING.

First.



FACE I saw at the "Monday Pop,"
I am longing to see again,
For it nearly made my pulses stop
With a feeling of woe and pain!
A grief to think that I ne'er might see
The love light that slumbering lies,
Gleam out its sunshine of life on me
From the depths of her big brown eyes!

Second.

A sweet pale face 'neath a widow's cap,
And so young for so sad a fate!
I wonder'd if life, by this sad mishap,
Had been made for her desolate!
Did joy and hope with her loved one die!
O! I felt I should much prefer
To think she was not *my* widow! for I
Would much rather have lived for her.

Third.

A merry face set in golden hair,
And with beautiful blue grey eyes;
I knew she was really and truly fair,
Not a maiden all paints and dyes!
O would I could paint her lovely face
As she will not herself! I cried;
My hair should be dark with death's embrace
If 'twas only for her I dyed!

Fourth.

A waxen face—is there nought behind,
High thought, or a heart's deep love;
Or is what she is pleased to call her mind
As flat as an unused glove!
No face for me! I will deeper look
For a bosom that holds a heart!
For a head with brains, that can teach the cook
A dinner from soup to tart!

Conclusion.

Can I find a woman with heart and hands,
And a head with a useful brain!
And a face that shows that she understands
Life should not be lived in vain—
That *some* things are higher than being drest
In a fashion to make men stare!
If e'er I meet her, I'll do my best
To marry her then and there!

J. W. ARROWSMITH, PRINTER, QUAY STREET, BRISTOL.